

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK

AND THE

INDIAN STATES, 1828-1835.

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of London

by

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ABSTRACT.

This is a study of the relations of Lord William Bentinck with the Indian states during his governor-generalship (1828-1835). It considers his attitude towards the Indian states, the ideas with which he was inspired and the methods with which he sought to accomplish them.

Bentinck's period was one of peace. It was disturbed by no internal and external wars of magnitude of the type which had characterised earlier periods. In this period the British government faced problems emerging from its supremacy which vitally affected the Indian states. Were those states, many of which were in a disorganized condition, to be perpetuated? And if so, how was the British government to conduct itself theoretically and practically towards them? Again, what part were the treaties to play in this relationship? These were questions to which no simple answer could be returned. Bentinck tried to answer them in a peaceful way. Drawing inspiration from the utilitarian ideas of his time he sought reform at the hands of the Indian princes. In place of coercing them he sought to influence them by policies of non-intervention, advice, persuasion and warning. Paramountcy was avowed but its use was conceived only in the last resort. In this study special attention has been given to instances which show the working of Bentinck's mind.

Both the official records of the Company and the private papers of Lord William Bentinck have been used.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.

In 1828 the possibility that any single power or combination of Indian Powers would contest British supremacy had ceased to exist, and the question of improving the internal condition of the Indian states was engaging the attention of the authorities both in India and in England more than ever before. (1) Hitherto while the British supremacy was not undisputed the conception prevailed that the British government was concerned with the internal affairs of the Indian states only when the resulting situation constituted a danger to contiguous British territory. And this idea was slow to lose force. Lord Hastings, even after the wars of 1817-18 which established British pre-eminence beyond question, asked the home government to repudiate categorically the contention that the internal affairs of a state involved the responsibility of the British government. (2) His conception was of a confederation in which the Indian states as component parts had "perfect internal sovereignty." (3) To the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Indian states Lord Amherst largely adhered, though being preoccupied with Burmese affairs he did not develop clear views on the matter. (4)

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(1) H.T.Prinsep, "Note on the Policy of Interference and non-interference for the consideration of the governor-general." 18 Dec.1830, Bentinck papers;

Bengal Despatches, 1 Oct. 1828 (political) Vol.108.

(2) Hastings, minute, 19 Dec. 1822, Beng.Sec.Cons. 20 Dec.1822. No. 8.

(3) Hastings, Private Journal, I, 54;

Hastings, minute, 3 April 1814, Beng.Sec.Cons. 21 June 1814. No. 4.

(4) Amherst, minute, 3 Sept. 1825, Beng.Sec.cons. 16 Sept. 1825. No.22;

Govt. to Resident at Gwalior, 9 April 1827, Beng.Sec.Cons. 1 June 1827.

In the time of Bentinck the problem of the internal administration of the Indian states could be considered independently of the question of any danger from them. The authorities both in England and in India seemed to be conscious of the change effected by the successful wars of Hastings and Amherst. (1) Bentinck's private letters speak repeatedly of the absolute safety of the empire and the utter incapacity of the Indian powers to dispute the British title to supremacy. (2) Bentinck's belief was not shared by his colleague and friend Sir Charles Metcalfe, who

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ibid. 17 Sept. 1827, Beng. Sec. Cons. 5 Oct. 1827. No. 3.

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- (1) Hastings, Summary of operations in India with their results,  
       5 April 1823, P.P.1831-32,  
       VIII, General Appendix, 93-112;  
       Board's Secret Drafts, 10 March 1823, No.144, Vol. 6;  
       Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830, Vol. 7.
- (2) Bentinck to Astell, 17 Oct. 1828, Bentinck Papers;  
       Bentinck to Grant, 1 May 1832, ibid.  
       Bentinck to Auber, 7 May 1833, ibid.

brooding over the mortality of empires, would see danger everywhere, but Bentinck held fast to his opinion. (1) In one of his last minutes recorded on the eve of his departure, Bentinck saw no other internal danger to the empire except such as arose from the increasing enlightenment of the people. (2)

The paramount position of the British government thus established by 1828 raised questions of far-reaching significance in so far as the Indian states were concerned. Were the Indian states to become an integral part of the British political system in India? And if so what was to be the practical and theoretical side of their relations with the British government? Already in one of the largest states of India, Hyderabad, the British government was exercising real powers in the form of controlling the choice of the minister which was not warranted by the treaty with Hyderabad. (3) Could the British government in theory as well in practice assume responsibility for good government in the states? And if so how was it to be accomplished and ensured?

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 11 Oct. 1829, Bentinck Papers;  
Bentinck to Auber, 12 May 1834, *ibid*.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 13 March 1835, P.P. 1867, LII (500), 68-69.

(3) Prinsep, Note, 18 Dec. 1830, Bentinck's Papers.

In such a position, again, what was to become of the titular sovereignty of the Mughal whose name the seal of the Company still bore and whose titles and distinctions were considered, in Metcalfe's words, "more respectable and more legitimate than those granted by the British Government"? (1) "The princes of Rajpootana," remarked another contemporary observer, "the Nizam and generally the Princes of India do not consider their accession to their several principalities complete, until they have done homage to the throne of Dehlee." (2) Such were the questions Amherst left for his successor to resolve after meeting the Mughal on terms of equality and after vindicating British paramountcy in the disputed succession in Bharatpur. (3)

When Bentinck took office the policy of the home government towards the Indian states was that of non-intervention. There might be a special cause or circumstance necessitating British intervention in particular states like Hyderabad and Nagpur but otherwise the internal concerns of the states involved no responsibility for the British government. It considered itself

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- (1) Metcalfe, Quoted by E. Thompson, The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, 287;  
 Delhi resident to Govt., 17 Jan. 1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 29 Feb.1828. No.39.  
 (2) J. Sutherland, Sketches of the relations subsisting between the British Government in India and the different Native States, 174.  
 (3) Gov. Gen's Sec. to Beng. Govt., 3 March 1827, Beng.Pol.Cons. 23 March 1827, No.11;

(Continued over .....)

entitled to interfere when the situation in a state would constitute a danger to the peace and security of British territory or that of its allies. (1) Until 1828 both the Directors and the Board of Control were agreed in this position.

In that year, however, Lord Ellenborough became the President of the Board of Control, and he sought to modify the policy of the Indian government in favour of an extended intervention. The British government, in his opinion, had become the paramount power in India and was to assert itself as such by looking into the internal affairs of the misgoverned states. He did not wish to do away with them but he held that, inasmuch as the British government protected them, it should, if necessary, boldly interfere for the regulation of their internal affairs.(2)

This attitude brought him into conflict with the Court of Directors and the Secret Committee, as they adhered to their old policy of non-intervention. The conflict became apparent when Bentinck framed a new treaty with the Raja of Nagpur embodying the principle of non-

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(3) Cont'd. Resolution of Gov.-Gen. in Council, 16 Sept. 1825, Beng. Sec. Cons. 16 Sept. 1825. No. 25.

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(1) Board's Secret Drafts, 23 March 1826, No. 166, Vol. 6;  
Metcalfe, minute, 20 Dec. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 31 Dec. 1830. No. 1.

(2) Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830, Vol. 7;  
ibid. 4 Sept. 1830, Vol. 7;

intervention. His action gave much dissatisfaction to Ellenborough who prepared a special despatch in which Bentinck's policy was roundly attacked. But the Secret Committee dissented and supported Bentinck. Ellenborough was firm, and the Secret Committee after strong opposition had to yield. Astell, who was chairman of the Court at this time, privately informed Bentinck of the change that the policy of the home government was undergoing. He wrote that the secret despatch of 9 June 1830 which criticised Bentinck's policy had been "framed at the Board, by which, contrary to the opinion of the Court, and in opposition to the strong remonstrances of the Secret Committee, the treaty was censured and the course of policy repeatedly recommended by the home authorities condemned." He also told Bentinck that the ultimate power rested with the Board, and that in spite of his efforts he could not prevent its exercise. (1)

This despatch, which went to India in spite of all the opposition the Secret Committee could muster, showed that Ellenborough was willing to assume for the British government much larger powers and obligations in respect of the states than had hitherto been done. Ellenborough was followed by Charles Grant (2) (1830-1834), who, like him but not so

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(1) Astell to Bentinck, 13 April 1831, Bentinck Papers;  
Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830, Vol. 7.

(2) Grant was followed again by Ellenborough in Dec. 1834 and the latter continued till April 1835.

energetically, sought to exercise greater influence in the internal affairs of the states. (1)

But though both Ellenborough and Grant stood for a new approach in British relations with the Indian states, the views of neither of them were consistent and they did not envisage interference for all states alike. (2) Their views again did not result in any clear enunciation of the policy of the home government towards the Indian states.

The situation in India at the time of Bentinck's arrival was complex. First the British ascendancy in the country was firmly established. The subsidiary forces of the Company in the larger states precluded them from being a military danger while the control of their foreign policies by the British government ruled out the possibility of their coalition. Of the external states, Burma and Nepal after their defeat, as Bentinck said, had become more conscious than before of their inferior power and resources; Afghanistan was weak and divided; and neither the Panjab nor Sind could think of trying conclusions with the British government with any chance of success. (3)

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(1) C.H.Philips, East India Company, 278-280

(2) Ellenborough to Bentinck, 2 Jan.1830, Bentinck Papers;  
C.H.Philips, East India Company, 271-274; 278-284.

(3) Bentinck, minute, 29 June 1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 2.

Secondly, the internal condition of many Indian states was unsatisfactory. The rulers were irresponsible and indifferent to the welfare of their subjects. The main states at this time were Oudh, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Indore, Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, Baroda, Cutch, the states of Rajputana, Malwa and Gujrat and some other small states. While all of these were protected and had surrendered control over their external affairs, the first nine were subsidiary states having Company's forces inside their territories over whom the British government had exclusive control. (1) The case of Gwalior was slightly different. It was theoretically not under British protection and controlled its own policies both internal and external. But it was surrounded on all sides by British territory or by states which could negotiate only with the British government, and so it could in effect correspond only with the British government. (2) Internally its government was weak and the British supremacy was acknowledged by its ruler and his subjects. (3)

These states enjoyed little peace. There were succession

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(1) Report of the Select Committee, P.P. 1831-32, XIV, 3.

(2) *ibid.* 4;

James Mill, evidence before the Select Committee, *ibid.* 5.

(3) Baiza Bai (Regent) to Gov.Gen., 1827, Beng.Sec.Cons. 28 Sept.1827.No.44;  
Resident to Govt., 16 June 1827, Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 July 1827. No. 2;  
Resident to Govt., 19 June 1827, Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 July 1827. No. 4.



disputes and the rulers sometimes found it difficult to discharge the ordinary task of maintaining order in their territories. In many states the rulers were guided by no regular system in the conduct of government, acting under the influence of evil advisers who sought to advance their own interests. The people here had little protection against the arbitrary conduct of the subordinate officers who were either uncontrolled or were able to have their way in concert with men at the court. The Company's forces in the subsidiary states protected the rulers from a fear of popular revolt and thus prevented a healthy check to misgovernment. Large sums of money were realised in arbitrary ways and spent equally recklessly. Things were drifting into chaos and it appeared to Bentinck that like the Carnatic, Tanjore and Benares in the past, many Indian states would in course of time be absorbed into British territories. (1)

Thirdly, the British relationship with the states did not always conform to the terms of the treaties. Most of these treaties left the rulers free in their internal affairs. (2) Lord Hastings, who is

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug. 1828, Beng.Pol.Cons.13 Sept.,1828. No. 1;  
Minute of conference between Bentinck and the King of Oudh on  
20 Jan.1831. Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept., 1832, No. 86.

(2) Metcalfe, minute, 20 Dec., 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 31 Dec. 1830, No.1.

stated by Lee-Warner to have concluded the largest number of treaties among the governors-general, founded them upon this concept. Internal sovereignty was considered sacrosanct and involving no responsibility for the British government. (1) When explaining his conception of an alliance of the Indian powers with the British government he stated emphatically that it meant no encroachment on the internal independence of the states. He met the objection to such a league that it might put a premium on misgovernment if the Indian rulers sought to abuse their internal freedom - by observing:

"What is that to us? One must lament to see any portion of the human race under oppressive sway. But we are not charged with the quixotic obligation of vindicating the rights of all mankind." (2)

Thus the treaties with the states of Rajputana concluded by Lord Hastings provided for the rulers' absolute authority inside their states. (3) The treaty with Gwalior left Sindia "the undisputed master of his own troops and resources." (4) Some of the treaties concluded

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- (1) Hastings, Private Journal, I, 54-55.  
 (2) Hastings, minute, 3 April 1814, Beng.Sec.Cons. 21 June 1814. No.4.  
 (3) Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, III, Treaties with Udaipur (13 Jan.1818) 30-31; Jaipur (2 April 1818) 104-105; Jodhpur (6 Jan.1818) 159-160. etc;  
 Col. Tod to T. Hyde, 23 March 1832, P.P.1831-32, XIV, Appendix, 124.  
 (4) Aitchison, Treaties, IV, Treaty of 5 Nov.1817. Article IV. 65.

by Lord Wellesley also secured to the rulers full internal freedom. In the case of Hyderabad the British government thus bound itself to have "no manner of concern with any of His Highness's children, relations, subjects, or servants" with respect to whom the Nizam was to be "absolute." (1)

While internal freedom was generally left to the ruler some treaties would nonetheless provide for British advice and even intervention in internal affairs in clear terms. The treaties with Mysore (2) and Oudh (3) obliged their rulers to act in conformity with the advice of the British government. The treaty with Baroda also obliged its ruler to listen to British advice and by a private engagement he was also deprived of the right of appointing a minister of his choice. The Dewan Raoji Appaji was confirmed permanently in his position there (4).

This was the position theoretically but practice did not

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- (1) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Treaty of 12 Oct. 1800. Article XV, 72; see also Wellesley's treaties with Gwalior, Nagpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Alwar etc.
- (2) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Treaty of 8 July 1799, Article XIV, 224.
- (3) Aitchison, Treaties, I, Treaty of 10 Nov. 1801, Article VI, 125-126.
- (4) Aitchison, Treaties, VIII, Treaty of 6 June 1802, Article V, 35; Appendix No.13 to the Treaty, 46.

always follow the treaty stipulations. In Hyderabad the British government was exercising great authority and even controlling the nomination of the minister from an early date. (1) In Mysore on the other hand where the exercise of intervention in internal affairs was a treaty right such power was for long not exercised. (2) However, even when there was no actual exercise of intervention such a power was deemed to vest in the British government by virtue of its pre-eminence and to surround its representative at the court with immense influence and authority. Stating his dissent from Bentinck's policy of non-intervention, Prinsep wrote in 1830

"Consistently with our position in India it is out of the question that affairs should be carried on anywhere without our influence being felt, whatever may be the rule established in regard to interference. In the matter, for instance, of a succession, all eyes are waiting, until our recognition is declared ----" (3)

Interference Metcalfe also considered unavoidable when the relationship in question was between the two powers, one "superlatively strong", the other miserably weak. (4)

Lord Hastings wishing to reserve for the rulers "perfect internal sovereignty" saw how difficult it was to restrain really

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- (1) N.B.Edmonstone to T.H.Villiers, 27 Oct.1829, P.P.1831-32, XIV, Appendix, 105-106;  
Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons. 14 Aug.1829. No.61B.  
(2) Report of the Enquiry Committee, 12 Dec.1833, Beng.Pol.Cons. 5 June 1834, No.24.  
(3) Prinsep, Note, 18 Dec.1830, Bentinck Papers.  
(4) Metcalfe, Minute, 20 Dec.1830, Beng.Pol.Cons. 31 Dec.1830. No. 1.

energetic residents from exercising influence in internal affairs. (1) Bentinck, not willing to see the solution of the Indian states' problem in annexation and deciding to hold the rulers exclusively responsible for good government inside their territories, was inclined to think in similar terms. (2) Viewing with disfavour the immense influence possessed by the residents at Nagpur and Hyderabad he privately told the resident at Lucknow that "in the exact proportion in which his interference shall not be exercised so will confidence in him, on the part of the local government, be established and the more harmoniously and satisfactorily will the affairs of the dependent power be conducted." (3)

It may be asked why Bentinck thought so. Did he consciously pursue non-intervention to enable the rulers to develop self-reliance and learn from their mistakes and shortcomings or did he passively allow events to take their course? Was there a purpose in his policy or was it a reaction to events and acts for which he was not responsible? And what again were his difficulties, aims and methods in dealing with the Indian states?

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- (1) Hastings, Private Journal, I, 47-48, 54;  
Hastings to Directors, 6 May 1823, P.P.1831-32, VIII, General Appendix, III.
- (2) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug.1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 13 Sept.1828. No.1.
- (3) Bentinck to Maddock, 20 Oct. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

These problems are the subject of this investigation.

Particular attention has been paid to instances showing the working of Bentinck's mind and revealing his inspiration. Use has been made of his private papers as well as of the official records of the Company.

## CHAPTER 2.

BENTINCK'S OUTLOOK AND VIEWS ON THE INDIAN STATES.

When Bentinck set out for India in February 1828 he was eminently qualified for the duties of the governor-generalship. For it was as no stranger that he was going there, and his zeal for reform had come to be established beyond question by that time. As the governor of Madras from 1803 to 1807 he had had the opportunity of making himself familiar with Indian politics and of learning the requirements of the Indian people. During his governorship the British were successful in the wars against the Marathas, and although he could not actively participate in the conflict, as the area of operations was so distant from Madras, he afforded such assistance as he could. He welcomed the outcome of these wars as affording a hope of benefitting "the great mass of the people whose rulers have been conquered" and of founding "British Greatness upon Indian Happiness." (1) These words written when he was thirty, show the man. His solicitude for the welfare of the people under his charge was to become a prominent feature of his character, the mainspring of his activity and enthusiasm in subsequent years.

Full of vigour and energy, he found the problems of the Madras presidency exacting and demanding firm handling. In combating faction,

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(1) Bentinck to Lord Wellesley, 1804, Boulger, Bentinck, 20.

"opposition and counteraction", which he found rampant in the government of Madras, he showed great resolution and fixity of purpose. While willing to work in hearty co-operation with Lord Wellesley he wanted no interference in the concerns of the Madras government, which he regarded as his own sphere. He avowed "a steady and determined resolution to do what is right, uninfluenced by party or prejudice." Lord Wellesley saw in him a "truly British spirit, sound judgement, and hereditary integrity and honour." (1) The Directors were also impressed to see in him "a determination to act for yourself" and for a time even considered elevating him to the governor-generalship. His unjust recall in 1807 for the mutiny at Vellore was unfortunate as he was at the time applying himself to the problems of the land revenue, upon which he felt "the happiness of millions" really depended. He showed himself in favour of a permanent settlement of the ryotwari type. The limitation of the government demand leaving the surplus to the cultivator he considered applicable "to this, and to every part of the world." (2)

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(1) Wellesley to Bentinck, 19 Nov. 1803, Wellesley's Despatches (Martin), III, 462

(2) Bentinck, minutes of 22 Jan. 1806, 29 April 1806 and 28 Nov. 1806, P.P. 1812, VII, Appendix, pp. 912-913; 919-921.



Bentinck's experience in different countries and among different peoples also played its part in his mental development. (1) While raising him above pedantic adherence to any one dogma or creed, it imparted a catholicity to his vision which accounted for his easy popularity with the people whom he governed. He early showed himself to be in sympathy with nationalism. In Sicily, as the commander-in-chief of the British forces in the Mediterranean from 1811 to 1814, he showed himself to be in favour of Italian unity and independence. In Genoa, which he captured from the French in 1814, he sympathised with the ardent desire of the people to return to "their former independence and ancient form of government" and restored their ancient republican constitution. (2) In pledging British faith to this constitution his ardour for the cause of the Genoese led him to exceed his instructions, and his conduct caused much annoyance to his government. Lord Castlereagh felt chagrined and wrote to Lord Liverpool describing him as "the best of the Buonaparte school." (3)

Bentinck's Catholicity of outlook lent an egalitarian flavour

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- (1) Bentinck's official career took him to Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and Egypt, besides India.  
 (2) Bentinck, Proclamation of 26 April 1814, Parl.Debs., XXX, Enclosure 4, 391-392.  
 (3) Castlereagh to Liverpool, 27 April 1814, A.Alison, Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart, II, 345.

to his ideas which made him view with disfavour the privileges of his own class. Thus in Sicily, where he had a free hand to work out his ideas, under his inspiration a new constitution was set up in 1812, the royal authority was curtailed and "the barons of Sicily," as he said with enthusiasm later, "presented one of the most glorious spectacles that the world ever beheld; they came forward with the voluntary surrender of their own feudal rights." (1) In 1821, as a member of the House of Commons, he raised his voice in behalf of the people of Sicily whose constitution, he said, had not been respected by the despotic government of Naples and whose "rights and privileges" had been violated by their forcible union with Naples. And he urged in an impassioned speech intercession on their behalf with the Neapolitan government. (2)

In England also Bentinck favoured the reform movement. In the twenties the house of Mrs. Grote was the meeting place of some of the leading radicals, and Bentinck is mentioned by her as among the persons belonging to "the choice society" which used to assemble

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(1) Bentinck, address on 21 June 1821, Parl. Debs. V, (New Series), 1237.

(2) *ibid.* pp. 1234-1240.

there. (1) The Reform Bill of 1832 appeared to him to be a very good measure although he doubted its getting through Parliament. (2) The principles for which he had stood for the past few years, he said in 1836, while standing for election to the House of Commons, were "a perfect equality of civil and religious rights," extension of suffrage, shorter duration of Parliament, reform of the House of Lords, Irish Church Reform and freedom of trade. (3) By men of his own time he was considered to be "the first man of high rank and station" who had

(1) Mrs. Grote, The Personal Life of George Grote, 42.

"Several eminent persons sought the choice society which from time to time met in that obscure corner of the City, and the influence exercised by their circle came to be felt outside with gradually augmenting power. Mr. David Ricardo, Mr. John Smith, M.P. Mr. John Black (of the 'Morning Chronicle'), Mr. Cameron, Mr. Norman, Mr. Thomas Campbell (the poet), Mr. John Austin and his brother Mr. Charles Austin, Mr. John Romilly, Mr. Charles Buller, Lord William Bentinck ---, all these, --- contributed to form the society, I speak of, in Threadneedle Street from 1822 down to 1830."

(2) Bentinck to Metcalfe, 17 July 1831, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Bentinck, address to the electors of Glasgow, The Times, 13 Feb. 1836. p.5  
He was elected to Commons in 1836. He favoured a quinquennial term for Parliament. The extension of suffrage was not contemplated by him beyond what was effected by the Reform Act of 1832. His idea of reforming the House of Lords consisted in bringing in a liberal majority in the House by the exercise of the royal prerogative.

"publicly professed the ultra-Radical opinions." (1)

With a passionate zeal for political and social reform was combined moral courage and earnestness of the highest order which enabled him to pursue his path unflinchingly in spite of unpopularity. Bentinck's economic reforms in India, during his governor-generalship, struck at powerful interests and evoked fierce opposition on the part of the civil and military services. He was boycotted by Calcutta European society. At some places in the Upper Provinces he was insulted. On one occasion his invitation to dinner was declined by the officers.(2) At Cawnpore, while the commander-in-chief's Lady was selected for special attention, Lady William was ignored. The press, mostly an organ of the European community at this time fully ventilated their grievances against Bentinck. The newspaper offices were "deluged" with denunciatory letters from "all ranks and branches of the service" pouring invective upon the governor-general, but Bentinck, with what would seem to be a real dignity of character, allowed the press to exhaust its venom without seeking to cripple it. "He was wont to say, snapping his fingers as he spoke, that he did not care a straw for the vituperations of the Press." (3)

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(1) Philip Morrell, Leaves from the Greville Diary, 301.

(2) Bentinck to Metcalfe, 1 Dec. 1831, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Kaye, Life and Correspondence of Lord Metcalfe, II, 251.

But perhaps the most notable part of Bentinck's character was the unaffected simplicity of his bearing. He frowned upon pageantry and the trappings of office and mixed freely with persons. In this he appealed to the hearts and imagination of many. Thus the French traveller Jacquemont found it easy to be on cordial terms with him. Nor could Jacquemont help expressing his admiration in warm terms. "But perhaps the man," he says, "who does the greatest honour to Europe in Asia is the one who governs it. Lord Bentinck, on the throne of the Great Moghul, thinks and acts like a Quaker of Pennsylvania. You may imagine whether there is any lack of people to exclaim over the dissolution of the empire and the end of the world when they see the temporary master of India riding about in an ordinary coat with no escort, or setting off for the country with his umbrella under his arm." (1) Years made him the more indifferent to honours. When, on his retirement from India, he was offered a peerage by Lord Melbourne, he declined the offer as he considered it of "no advantage" to him. (2)

Bentinck had the defects of his qualities. His independence of character ensured his firmness in dealing with difficult issues but it was

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(1) Jacquemont to Victor de Tracy, 1 Sept. 1829, Letters from India, 1829-32, 12.  
 (2) Bentinck to Metcalfe, 7 March 1836, Bentinck Papers.

also seen at times to make co-operation with others difficult. Thus in Madras he found it difficult to work amicably with his colleagues or with the chief justice (Sir Henry Gwillim). In Italy he could not co-ordinate his schemes with those of the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, and thereby hampered the war effort of the allies in their crusade against Napoleonic France. While governor-general in India, seeing the desirability of a change in the seat of government, he was on the point of effecting his purpose without the prior consent of the home government, but he was restrained by them. (1) The Duke of Wellington considered him "a wrong-headed man" who if he went wrong would continue in the wrong line. "Other men," thought the Duke, "might go wrong and find it out, and go back; but if he went wrong he would either not find it out, or if he did, he would not go back." (2)

Bentinck's radical views on foreign and domestic affairs deprived him of the favour of his government, and for a long time after his Italian career, he remained without an appointment. In the ministry of Liverpool (1812-27) Castlereagh was always conscious of his "impracticability and Whiggism, which seem to follow him everywhere." (3)

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(1) Dalhousie, memorandum on the removal of government, 15 March 1830, Bentinck Papers.

Dalhousie was commander-in-chief in India from 1830-32.

(2) Ellenborough, Political Diary, 23 June 1829, II, 56-57.

(3) Castlereagh to Liverpool, 27 April 1814, Alison, Lives, II, 345.

The Duke of Wellington had a strong prejudice against him, and Liverpool's dislike for him was no secret. Thus in 1822 when Bentinck put forward his claims to the governor-generalship of Bengal in succession to Lord Hastings, though supported by "a very powerful party in the Court of Directors" he could not get the appointment because of his not being in favour with Liverpool, and both King George and Liverpool concurred in rejecting him. (1) In <sup>1824</sup>~~1814~~ there was a clamour of conservative statesmen against his appointment to the Ionian islands. "They are," writes Mrs. Arbuthnot in her journal, "in a great fuss now for fear Ld Wm Bentinck sh<sup>d</sup> be appointed to succeed Sir T. Maitland as Ld High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. Metternich said all the Italian Sovereigns, and first among them the Emperor himself, w<sup>d</sup> protest loudly against it. They have a greater horror of Ld Wm than of any other radical in Europe and last year, when Ly Wm was in Italy they never allowed her to get a single letter from Ld Wm. However, they need not be in a fuss this time as Sir Fred: Adam is to succeed Sir Thos. " (2)

In 1825 the early British reverses in the Burmese war and the

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(1) Liverpool to King, 7 Oct. 1822; King to Liverpool, 8 Oct. 1822, C.D.Yonge, Life and administration of Earl of Liverpool, III, 204-205.

(2) The Journal of Mrs. Arbuthnot (1820-1830) edited by Francis Bamford and the Duke of Wellington, I, 288-289.

mutiny at Barrackpur set the home government thinking about Amherst's recall and Bentinck again came into the picture as a possible candidate of the Directors but the Duke of Wellington showed himself to be strongly against his appointment and told Liverpool that "if Lord William Bentinck should be chosen by the Court of Directors he must be rejected by the government at all events." (1) Liverpool concurred with him entirely in "the expediency of recommending Sir Thomas Munro in the event of Lord Amherst's recall." (2) Amherst, however, was not recalled. Seeing odds heavy against him Bentinck seems to have retired into the political background, and in December 1825 his relative Lord Canning was finding it difficult to ascertain his whereabouts. (3)

Liverpool's illness and death in 1827 opened the way for Bentinck's appointment by Canning. In 1825 in response to Canning's request, Bentinck had promised him his full support in the election of an Irish representative to the House of Lords and so Canning expected a request in return from Bentinck, to be appointed as Amherst's successor. (4)

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(1) Duke to Liverpool, 10.Oct.1825. Wellington's Despatches (A.R.Wellesley) II, 516-518.

(2) Liverpool to Charles Wynn, 13 Oct.1825, *ibid.* 541-542.

(3) Canning to Liverpool, 6 Dec.1825, E.J.Stapleton, Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, I, 337.

(4) Canning to Liverpool, 8 Dec.1825, *ibid.* 341. Bentinck acknowledged his appointment to Canning in his speech at the East India dinner. Bentinck's dinner address, 1827, Bentinck Papers. Canning, however, was not anxious for his appointment and first made the offer successively to Melville, Wynn, Tierney, Wellesley, and Wellesley's brother. Bentinck was thus his sixth choice.  
C.H.Philips, East India Company, 261, footnote.



And so when Canning became the Prime Minister there was little obstacle left to Bentinck's appointment. He was appointed in July 1827. But Canning died in August, and was succeeded by Viscount Goderich, whose ministry was short lived, and in January 1828 the Duke of Wellington became the Prime Minister. Because of these ministerial changes Bentinck, though appointed in July 1827, could not set sail for India until February 1828 when he had become more sure of the support of the new government.

Before his departure for India Bentinck came into contact with James Mill at two dinners, one given by Douglas Kinnaird and the other by Mrs. Grote. On both occasions Mill availed himself of the opportunity of "trumpeting" the Panopticon and though he could not find in him an intellectual peer he saw him actuated by good intentions. (1) Bentinck was even more impressed by Mill than was Mill by Bentinck, (2) and went to the extent of declaring himself a disciple of Bentham. "I am going to British

(1) Bentham to Young, 28 Dec. 1827, Bentham's Works (Bowring), X, 576-577.

(2) Mill was an Assistant Examiner at the India House at this time. In 1822 Mill had considered Bentinck to be the best candidate for the governor-generalship of Bengal. Both as a man and by the work he subsequently performed in India, Bentinck ranked high in Mill's estimation. (Bain, James Mill, 203-204, 390). Bentinck, on the other hand, though not much interested in reading, read Mill's evidence before Parliamentary committees with "great pleasure" and "profitable instruction." He also made use of Mill's History of India in his official work and considered it an "able" book.

Bain, James Mill, 367;

Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2.

In this minute on Oudh Bentinck refers to Mill's comment on the treaty of 1801 with Oudh.

India," he said, "but I shall not be Governor-General. It is you that will be Governor-General." (1) Bentham, devoted to the acceptance of his ideas in England and other countries, could not but rejoice to find in Bentinck an easy disciple, and sanguinely hoped for utilitarian reforms in India. (2) In 1829, on reading Bentinck's notice in the 'Oriental Herald,' inviting suggestions from the public for the diffusion of useful knowledge <sup>for advancing the</sup> and prosperity of the Indian people, Bentham felt that the country had been entrusted to the right person and that "the golden age of British India" had dawned. (3)

Bentinck went to India but India did not attract him. (4) He saw much poverty, ignorance and backwardness there and was not impressed. (5) Outside Europe, as he once told Metcalfe, he would rather have seen America

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- (1) Bentham to Young, 28 Dec. 1827, op.cit.
  - (2) Bentham to Ram Mohan Roy, Bentham's Works (Bowring), X, 589-592.
  - (3) Bentham to Bentinck, 19 Nov. 1829, Bentham Mss. Box 10. Folder 22.f.179  
"Reading this invitation it seems to me that I behold the golden age of British India were (sic) lying before me."
  - (4) In one of his private letters he states pecuniary considerations to be the main reason for his having gone to India.  
Bentinck to Earl of Gosford, 2 Aug. 1832, Bentinck Papers.
  - (5) Bentinck, minute, 30 May 1829, P.P. 1831-32, General Appendix, VIII, 275.

and its happiness and improvement than the rest of the world.(1) He found little to admire even in works of art, and that great piece of Mughal architecture, the Taj Mahal, did not attract him. He has even been credited with the intention of seeing it pulled down and making money from its marble. (2) His utilitarian outlook, shunning grandeur, was an object of comment among his contemporaries, and Calcutta during his time was no longer the gay centre of European entertainment that it had been before him.(3)

Soon after his arrival in India in July 1828, Bentinck saw the need for drastic reform in every branch of administration. The task was immense and seemed to demand Herculean efforts for real amelioration. "Now what is the actual state of the country?" he asked himself ten months after his arrival, only to report a melancholy picture. "Is it not true that the great body of the people is wretchedly poor and ignorant? Do not we every day perceive how little our officers possess the knowledge necessary to their good government---? Are not the files of our civil courts loaded with arrears of business? --- Are not the native officers in all departments alleged to be guilty of much extortion and corruption?---

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(1) Bentinck to Metcalfe, not dated, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Beresford, Journal, I, European mss. 99, 110.

The truth of this statement has been denied by Dr. Spear.

T.G.P.Spear "Lord William Bentinck," Journal of Indian History, Vol.XIX, April, 1940, 101.

(3) E.Roberts, Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan, III, 69-103.

Do not several revolting and brutalizing practices still prevail among the people?---- Do our institutions contain the seeds of self-improvement?"  
(1)  
And wherever Bentinck went he felt more the need for urgent reform.(2)

The period of wars in India Bentinck considered to be over, the British supremacy to be established beyond cavil and no Indian power to be able to measure swords with the British government with any chance of success. This fact, Bentinck thought, gave a different complexion to British rule in India. The resources of the country had been used hitherto for establishing peace and tranquillity, the vital conditions for reform and progress. That consummation reached, the moral and material well-being of the people was to follow.(3)

In the scheme of reform Indians were to figure prominently. His was no gloomy conviction of their utter degeneracy or their inherent

(1) Bentinck, minute, 30 May 1829, P.P.1831-32, General Appendix, VIII, 275.

(2) Bentinck to Directors from Simla, 15 Sept.1831, P.P.1831-32, XI, Appendix, 298-300;

Bentinck to Charles Grant, 21 Dec.1832, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Bentinck, minute on roads, 1831, Bentinck Papers.

"Upon India have the resources of India been expended, they have hitherto been employed for the purposes of war, they will henceforth be devoted to the works of peace, to secure and improve the condition of all classes, to bring into life the vast dormant resources, which undoubtedly exist and to found a British empire in India, not less solid or less worthy of admiration by all Asiatic nations than Britain has been to the European world."

incapacity for noble aspirations, but an optimistic hope for their advancement by education and their rightful place ultimately in the administration of their country. "A believer in the utilitarian principle of self-improvement," observes Dr.Spear, "he considered that the people of India should not only be improved by others but could improve themselves by their own efforts. His panacea was English education." (1) The employment of Indians in larger numbers and higher positions was intended to be a step in the same direction. And he felt satisfied that "Native probity and talent" could be found in sufficient numbers if a judicious selection were made. (2)

The finance committees set up by Bentinck in 1828 to suggest measures of economy and to enquire into the judicial and revenue branches of the administration were to keep in mind that "His Lordship in Council is particularly desirous of receiving the fullest possible information as to the success of employing native agency in the three Presidencies." (3) While superintendence and direction was to be vested in Europeans, in the

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- (1) T.G.P. Spear "Lord William Bentinck," Journal of Indian History, Vol.XIX, April, 1940, 109.  
 (2) Bentinck to Directors, 15 Sept. 1831, P.P.1831-32, XI, Appendix, 299; Bentinck to Grant, 21 Dec.1832, Bentinck Papers.  
 (3) Resolution of Gov-Gen. in Council, 25 Nov. 1828, Bentinck Papers.

management of details Indians were to replace them. "The difficulties, drawbacks and imperfections unavoidably belonging to an administration, conducted by Europeans and foreigners" having a limited acquaintance with the customs, habits and language of the people, were to be remedied by an extensive recourse to native agency. And in the advocacy of this cause Bentinck's tirade was against his own countrymen. "It appears," he says in the same minute, "to be an error in all our administrative arrangements, that we have calculated upon a degree of imaginary perfection in the agency by which this country is exclusively governed, which it would be utterly inconsistent with the laws of human nature that it can possess." (1)

Bentinck took steps to give a more extensive employment to Indians in the judicial and revenue branches of the administration, but felt by no means satisfied with his efforts in that direction. He welcomed the Charter Act of 1833 as removing statutory disqualifications for the employment of Indians by making merit the criterion of eligibility but felt that it had to be interpreted liberally in favour of Indians. (2) From the legislative council established by the Charter Act of 1833 he considered the exclusion of Indians to be very unfortunate. "To them the

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 10 Nov. 1831, Enclosure No. 9 to Bengal Public Letter of 27 Dec. 1831. Beng. Pub. Letters Recd. Vol. 21.

(2) Bentinck's reply to the address of Indians, India Gazette, 13 March 1835.

distinction would have been most acceptable and not open to any objection that I can imagine, while to us strangers in the land, their aid in the work of legislation would have been most useful." (1) He saw the signs of a change in India and urged the wisdom of recognising the forces that were slowly setting a new India on foot. "The mind of this country," he says in a private letter to Auber "is receiving a new impulse and we must keep pace with it. Three thousand boys are learning English at this time and the same desire for knowledge is universally spreading." (2)

This view of Bentinck's that Indians should be able to hold office in increasing numbers and to improve their institutions by themselves was also to influence him in his relations with the Indian states. His endeavour in that sphere was to secure reform by the rulers themselves, and for the realisation of that object he was prepared to hazard the greatest possible measure of internal freedom in the states that could arouse a

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 20 June 1834, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Bentinck to Auber, 12 May 1834, Bentinck Papers.

On the subject of the employment of Indians Bentinck used to feel strongly even after his retirement from India. In his evidence before the Select Committee in 1837 Bentinck called the British policy in India "cold, selfish and unfeeling" in excluding Indians from office. He spoke bitterly of the patronage of the Directors, exercised not in the interest of the Indian people but of their "clients" who engrossed all "the honours and emoluments of the state ---- to the exclusion of the natives."

Bentinck, evidence on 14 July 1837 before the Select Committee,  
P.P.1837. VI (0.91), 189.

sense of responsibility in the rulers and stimulate them to work for popular advancement.

In the Indian states he encountered a difficult problem. The internal condition of these states was deplorable. The rulers in many cases were irresponsible, with little care for the concerns of government or for the interests of their subjects. The nature of their connection with the British government, by which they came to depend upon her for protection, was seen to have cramped their energy for good government and to have lulled them into easy and puerile pursuits much to the misery of their subjects. (1) Bentinck saw the disordered condition of the states and soon after his arrival was confronted with the task of formulating his policy towards them.

He came to India with no desire to interfere in their affairs. His objects in India as set out in a letter to Peter Auber were "to promote the order, improvement and happiness of the territories subject to the East India Company and to maintain peace and good will among tributary chiefs and neighbouring powers." (2) He found after his arrival that the task of determining British relations with the Indian states was not an easy one. "Not a consultation," he observed in his minute of 25 August 1828,

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(1) N.B.Edmonstone to T.H.Villiers, 27 Oct.1829, P.P.1831-32, XIV,104-105.

(2) Bentinck to Auber, 3 Aug.1827, Bentinck Papers.



"has passed since I have taken my seat in the Council, in which the question of interposition in the internal affairs of independent tributaries has not been the occasion of much deliberation and embarrassing discussion." (1) In framing his policy he had to take into account that the Company's treaties with many of the states sanctioned internal freedom. "The instances are limited," said Metcalfe, in his minute of 20 December 1830, "in which the Treaties deprive the Native States of the inherent rights of sovereignty in their own dominions. In Treaties with the greater states they are preserved to them without mention as rights unquestionable. In those with many minor states they are expressly reserved to them, in order that the acknowledged supremacy of the British government in general politics may not be construed as extending to interference in internal affairs." (2)

The attitude of the home government was another factor to be considered. It had plainly avowed non-intervention. "The system of avoiding interference in the internal affairs of the states," Metcalfe remarked in 1828, "is not only apparently right in principle but is almost enjoined to an unlimited extent by the Home Authorities appointed to rule

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 1828. No. 1.

(2) Metcalfe, minute, 20 Dec. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 31 Dec. 1830. No. 1.

India." (1) Not only was such a policy strictly enjoined on the government of India but as late as 1826, when Metcalfe as resident at Delhi claimed British intervention in the disputed succession in Bharatpur in consequence of British supremacy, the Secret Committee peremptorily repudiated any such right of the British government and informed the government of India that:

"We cannot admit that the extension of our power by the events of the years 1817 and 1818 has in any degree extended our right of interference in the internal concerns of other states, except in so far as that right has been established by treaty."

The Secret Committee further drew attention to their instructions of 10 March 1823, when they had said "--- on every principle of right and policy, you should abstain from interference unless the peace of the British territories should be disturbed or the interests of anyone of your allies or Dependents seriously affected." (2)

Taking into consideration both the treaties with the Indian states and the policy of the home government till this time (1828) Bentinck decided on non-intervention and on giving the rulers full opportunity of improving their affairs by their own efforts. His problem, as he said, was of "framing a line of conduct which shall at one and the same time respect the perfect independence of the Sovereign, and yet shall maintain the right of his

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 8 Sept.1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 13 Sept.1828. No.3.  
 (2) Board's Secret Drafts, 23 March 1826, No.166, Vol.6;  
 Metcalfe, memorandum, 29 Aug.1825, Beng.Sec.Cons. 16 Sept.1825. No. 21.

subjects against arbitrary acts, acts which he only ventures to commit from a sense of his security from retaliation under the protection of our guarantee." (1)

But at this time he appeared to think more of "the inherent rights" of the Indian states arising from their treaties with the British government. The problem of the Indian states having definite engagements with the British government also did not seem to him to be entirely free from international implications and hence all the more complex.

"They (Supreme Government) do not conceive that any prima facie case of the unsuccessful exercise of our supremacy can be established by the civil dissensions which occasionally break out in the Rajput states because it is either optional to desist from interference under the influence of respect for internal independence, or to interpose our power for the sake of universal tranquillity ---- or in another view, we are precluded from such interference by the obligations of treaties, and inherent rights of those states, which is a question of international law also subject to the consideration of the Supreme Government." (2)

Hence it seemed evident to Bentinck that the treaties should play an important part in determining British relations with the states. Bentinck indeed avowed his government's decision to adhere "to the very letter" of the treaties.(3) In regard to the states of Rajputana which were often troubled by internal disturbances, Bentinck thus stated his mind to Sir John Malcolm: "I am not disposed to feel much respect for these Rajput chieftains. They are like your old highland clans, brave plunderers, with all the weakness, conceit and vanity of Asiatic communities. Nothing but time and the steady operation of the policy laid down by the treaties can

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828. No. 1.  
 (2) Govt's resolution of 13 Sept. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828. No. 4.  
 (3) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug. 1828. Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828. No. 1.

restore perfect order to that country." (1)

Among the early councillors of Bentinck when he framed his views on the Indian states were Lord Combermere (the commander-in-chief), William Butterworth Bayley and Metcalfe. Of these, Combermere had little to say on the problem of the states and Bayley recognised the superior experience of Metcalfe. And so it fell to Metcalfe to expound his views in several minutes on the line of policy to be followed in relation to the Indian states. His long experience enabled him to speak at length and with great confidence on the subject and he seemed to enjoy the task. He had served as resident at Gwalior, Delhi and Hyderabad and had taken an active part in the political and military transactions of his time. (2)

In the course of his long experience he had had occasion to carry into effect "both interfering and non-interfering policy" and he concluded in favour of a policy of non-intervention. He held the "evil" created by interference to be generally "irremediable." "It virtually, if not ostensibly, destroys the state to which it is applied, and leaves it

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(1) Bentinck to Malcolm, 26 Aug. 1828, Bentinck Papers.

(2) He was acting resident at Gwalior in 1810 and resident at Delhi in 1811. In 1819 he was Secretary in the Secret and Political Department of Bengal Government. From 1820 to 1825 he was resident at Hyderabad when he went to Delhi as resident and agent to governor-general in Rajputana. He joined the Supreme Council on 24 August 1827 and after Bentinck's retirement acted provisionally as the governor-general.

only a nominal, if any, existence." (1) When asked by Bentinck soon after his arrival, to give his views on the question of the dissensions and civil wars in Rajputana which made it appear prima facie that the exercise of British supremacy in that region had not been successful, Metcalfe replied:

"If therefore such internal disturbances are held to be proofs of mismanagement on our part, the Supreme Government has the remedy in its power. We may put them down by direct interference in the internal affairs of such states.

From such interference in my opinion worse evils would arise, difficult but more objectionable disturbances, and I expect, if non-interference have a fair trial, that is, be steadily and consistently pursued for a sufficient time, that internal dissensions and disturbances in protected states would cease." (2)

Though he saw in Bentinck a disposition to act for himself and not to fall under anyone's influence, Metcalfe both by his minutes and by private letters exerted his influence in favour of a policy of non-intervention. Finding in Bentinck "a straight forward, honest, upright, benevolent, sensible man," who had "the interests of the state at heart," his role came to be that of the elder statesman. Bentinck, while maintaining his independence of judgement, would never hesitate to avail himself of his advice and experience. When questioned by Ellenborough in 1829 on the

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 14 Aug. 1835, Kaye, Selections from Metcalfe's Papers,

This minute was recorded when he was acting as the governor-general after Bentinck's retirement.

(2) Metcalfe, minute, 8 Sept. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828. No. 3.

subject of the Indian government and its future, Bentinck unhesitatingly passed on the queries to Metcalfe with the observation:

"Anxious as I must be to answer to this call, but sensible at the same time of my own incompetence to the task, I can only obtain the information Lord Ellenborough wants by a recourse to greater experience and knowledge. I confidently apply to you for that assistance which no man in India is better able to afford." (1)

Not only did Metcalfe lend full support to Bentinck in his policy of non-intervention, the vindication of that policy also became his self-assigned task. In 1830 Bentinck's withdrawal of British control from Nagpur was severely censured by Ellenborough.(2) The reply to this despatch of the Secret Committee which censured Bentinck's policy was given not by Bentinck but by Metcalfe in the form of a long minute in which he resolutely defended the policy of Bentinck and the measures taken in Nagpur. (3) The force of his arguments was recognised by the home government although they adhered to their instructions contained in the despatch of 9 June 1830. (4)

For a time after Bentinck's decision in 1828 not to interfere in the internal affairs of the states his views began to unfold themselves

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- (1) Ellenborough to Bentinck, 19 May 1829, Bentinck Papers; Bentinck to Metcalfe, 16 Sept.1829, *ibid*.
  - (2) Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830, Vol.7.
  - (3) Metcalfe, minute, 20 Dec.1830, Beng.Sec.Cons. 31 Dec.1830. No. 1.
  - (4) Board's Secret Drafts, 6 Dec.1831, Vol.8.

more and more in favour of their internal independence. His policy came to be twofold, non-interference in the internal concerns of the states and withdrawal of the control exercised by the British government where he considered it to be vexatious and inconsistent with the pursuit of a liberal policy towards the states. Acting on this he withdrew British intervention from Hyderabad and Nagpur in 1829. He instructed the resident at Lucknow not to interfere in the internal affairs of Oudh and told him in 1830 that while it was necessary that conditions in Oudh should be reformed it was "most desirable that this should be done by the royal authority exclusively. Direct interference which is in fact nothing more or less than the transfer of the government from the King to the resident is, as far as my observation goes, the very worst course to be permitted." (1)

In thus withdrawing British intervention from the states Bentinck wanted to give the rulers a free hand to improve their affairs by their own efforts. The time, he thought, was suitable for trying the experiment. For while the British supremacy was not firmly established there might be justification in exercising influence in the Indian states in an indirect form, but now that the British government had become paramount, Bentinck

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(1) Bentinck to Maddock, 4 Aug. 1830, Bentinck Papers;  
 ibid. 28 May 1830, Bentinck Papers;

saw none. And he disliked any form of indirect interposition of British authority, especially in the form of an appointment of the minister, which without making the British government directly responsible for good government was not conducive to the authority of the ruler. (1)

Any indirect interposition creating a duality of control, Bentinck felt sure, could not operate satisfactorily and was a concealment of British authority which he considered unwarranted. (2) And he showed himself anxious to avoid this "evil" by withdrawing British interference from the states and by making the rulers directly responsible for good government. "It has been a principle of British policy," he said to the governor of Madras, "approved and uniformly acted upon by His Lordship, to avoid this evil, as far as possible, by withdrawing from interference with the native governments so connected with us, leaving them to conduct their own affairs uncontrolled by the British officers at their Courts, and subject only to the general responsibility incident to their position. But it is essential to the success of the system that if after warning duly given, the government so left to pursue its measures, fail to acquit itself of the obligation it is under to its subjects, to provide for them a decent

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(1) Beng.Sec.Letters Recd. 6 Sept.1831.

(2) Bentinck to Lushington (governor of Madras), 6 Sept.1831. Madras.Sec. Cons. 4 Oct. 1831. No. 4;

Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 6 Sept. 1831.



administration, if instead of order, tranquillity and security to life and prosperity, disorganisation prevail in all departments with insurrection, disturbance, violence, plundering and bloodshed, the remedy must be to provide an administration exempt from the evils of inefficiency, incident to the reprobated system of double government, by assuming the direct control of all affairs and conducting them through our officers." (1)

At the same time Bentinck was coming to feel from the adverse reports of residents at several courts that a course of non-intervention was becoming increasingly difficult to follow. He did not abandon non-intervention at once but saw the inevitability of intervention in extreme cases. If misgovernment in a state persisted he thought now that the British government could interfere as a matter of course and irrespective of treaty stipulations. Such a course in his opinion was justified by the paramount position of the British government in India which entitled it to interfere as a last resort in defence of the people of a misgoverned state in violation of the terms of the treaty. Thus on the subject of misgovernment in Oudh his words indicating a change in the position he had earlier held were:

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(1) Supreme Govt. to Madras Govt., 8 June 1831, Madras Sec. Cons. 4 Oct. 1831. No.3.

"My opinion upon this subject entirely accords with one upon a similar question contained in a letter from my worthy colleague (1) when resident at Hyderabad, under date the 31st August 1822: 'I suppose our interference in His Highness's affairs to be not merely a right but a duty, arising out of our supremacy, which imposes upon us the obligation of maintaining the tranquillity of all countries connected with us, and consequently of protecting the people from oppression, as no less necessary than the guaranteeing of their rulers against revolution---' Our duty and right of interference would have been the same whether Lord Wellesley's treaty had been made or not, while the stipulation, by which the Vizier bound himself not to oppress his people, takes away from him all excuse for his own mismanagement, and all pretext for complaining of our interposition."

And Bentinck felt further that "advice, remonstrances and measures merely negative will avail nothing" and that only "the arm of power forcibly interposed" could bring about the desired reform. (2)

This was in marked contrast to his stand in 1828 when he had announced his government's decision to be regulated in its conduct towards the states by "the strictest adherence" to "the very letter" of the treaties. (3)

Inspired by this new conception of British obligations, Bentinck interfered vigorously in Mysore in September 1831 to deprive the prince of all the powers of government. (4) Bentinck's annexations of the three states of Cachar, Coorg and Jaintia in 1832, 1834 and 1835 were also made

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(1) Metcalfe

(2) Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng.Pol.Cons. 30 Sept.1831. No.2.

(3) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug.1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 13 Sept.1828. No.1.

(4) Beng.Sec.Letters Recd. 6 Sept. 1831.

after this change in his ideas.

But though Bentinck interfered drastically in Mysore and annexed the states of Cachar, Coorg and Jaintia it would not be correct to say that Bentinck's policy in practice underwent a revolutionary change in favour of intervention and annexation. While affirming the right of intervention in Oudh in the strongest possible words he did not actually interfere. In Mysore in 1834 he felt regret for the intervention he had exercised in 1831. (1) In Hyderabad though recognising that the withdrawal of British control had not been successful in establishing good conditions there he left the matter in the hands of the home government for determination. (2) In a minute in 1834 in which he took stock of his administration he showed himself to be against the coercion of the Indian princes. (3) Non-intervention did in fact on the whole represent his earnest effort and hope to tackle the problem of the Indian states in a peaceful manner and he would not ordinarily depart from it.

In conclusion, it may be said that Bentinck's problem was to identify the interests of the people in the states with those of the rulers. In a peaceful way he sought to do so by influencing the princes to become

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(1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834.  
 (2) India Pol. <sup>n</sup>Letters Recd. 25 July 1834. No.6. Vol I.  
 (3) Bentinck, minute, 20 June 1834, Bentinck Papers.

good rulers. Non-intervention, personal contact and communication with the princes themselves together with the influence of the resident were his chief weapons. Such a course was consistent with the particular circumstance of the states having definite engagements with the British government, with the policy of the home government, and with his own utilitarian ideas which made it his study and purpose to educate Indians in the task of self-improvement and reform.

## CHAPTER 3.

THE MYSORE ASSUMPTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

The case of Mysore is a good example of the working of Bentinck's mind. Here he intervened drastically after becoming convinced of the necessity of entirely superseding the authority of the Raja. By this intervention he intended to secure to the people of Mysore a better government and at the same time to produce a healthy effect upon the minds of the Indian princes as a whole. In resorting to this extremity Bentinck sincerely sought the welfare of the people of Mysore and not an aggrandizement of British power or territory. It was a clear assertion of the paramount power for a benevolent purpose.

After the assumption a number of circumstances combined to fill Bentinck's mind with misgiving about his action. He doubted the propriety of the assumption and felt that the Raja was not as degenerate as he had believed. He read his character favourably and felt strongly that, if again vested with authority, the Raja would not fail to benefit from his past mistakes and acquit himself well. The interests of the ruler and the ruled would be harmonized and a happy situation created. Hopeful of the Raja's future conduct he was even ready to restore him the government of about half of his country. He made a proposal to that effect to the home authorities and hoped that they would agree to it.

Behind his change of attitude lay Bentinck's abounding faith in human nature and the desire to see the Raja a different person in the future. From the viewpoint of consistency Bentinck's stand was weak. He seems to have been vacillating between legal and moral considerations and

this raised the question of the limits of British authority. Was it to go no further than the treaties permitted? But the change in his ideas showed him in all his earnestness and sincerity. He did not hesitate to put his doubts openly before the home government and to speak for the Raja. His aim was to encourage the Indian princes in the work of reform, and if he felt satisfied that after the healthy shock he had given to the Raja, he could govern well in the future, Bentinck was ready to give him power and responsibility.

In dealing with the government of Mysore Bentinck had to face the problem of maladministration in an acute form. The relations of the British government with this state were regulated by a treaty formed in 1799, when, after the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan, the old Hindu dynasty ousted by Haidar Ali was restored under Krishna Raj Udaiyar, a child of about three years of age. The treaty stipulated for a subsidiary force for the defence and security of Mysore, for which the Raja was to pay an annual subsidy to the British government. (1) It forbade any direct intercourse with any other state and provided, in case of financial confusion and misgovernment, for a temporary assumption of the administration by the British government. (2) It further required the Raja "to pay at all times"

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(1) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Treaty of 8 July 1799, Article II, 221.

(2) *ibid.* Articles IV and V, 221-222.

his "utmost attention" to the advice of the British government in all important matters of internal administration. (1)

During the minority of the Raja the administration was conducted by the minister Purnaiya in close collaboration with the British government. In 1811 the Raja assumed the powers of government himself and British interference was formally withdrawn in 1814. From this time there set in a decline in the administration which continued until <sup>in</sup> Bentinck's time it had produced a rising. (2)

The Raja, because of his negligence and misrule became involved in serious financial difficulty. In 1825 the governor of Madras, Sir Thomas Munro, paid a visit to Mysore, and advised the Raja in person to curtail the expenses of his government and warned him of the consequences of his continued neglect and mismanagement. (3) The warning had a salutary effect for a time. It produced an attempt at amendment and the combined efforts of the resident and the minister were successful in reducing the debt considerably but this improvement could not be maintained and in 1831 the aggregate debt of Mysore state stood over 17 lakhs of canteroy pagodas. (4)

The Raja had also spent the vast treasure left by Purnaiya

- (1) *ibid.* Article XIV, 224. Trade, industry, agriculture, revenue and justice, all these matters came within the scope of British advice.
- (2) Report of the Enquiry Committee, 12 Dec. 1833, *Beng. Pol. Cons.* 5 June 1834. No. 24.  
The Committee was appointed by Bentinck in 1832 to report on the causes of the rising and its ultimate suppression.  
This report was also published in 1858 by the Mysore government.
- (3) A.J. Arbuthnot, Sir Thomas Munro, II, 76-86.
- (4) Resident to Govt., 20 July 1831, *Madras Sec. Cons.* 27 Sept. 1831. No. 2.  
J.A. Casamaijor was resident from 1825. He continued till 1834 when Col. J.S. Fraser succeeded him.  
A centeroy pagoda was equivalent to about 3 rupees.

during the ten years of his administration. (1) He had also caused a serious alienation of revenue by extensive grants of land and costly gifts to Brahmans and temples. Since the time of Purnaiya the expense of these grants in land and money had increased to about 2 lakhs of canteroy pagodas. The embarrassed state of the finances had prompted the resident and the minister to advise the Raja to resume many of them, but he had resisted such advice. He considered it derogatory to his character and authority to withdraw what he had given by a royal decree. (2)

The revenues of the state in later years of the Raja's government were also affected by a fall in the price of agricultural produce. In Mysore a large proportion of the revenues was received in kind and a fall in prices brought a corresponding diminution of revenue. Not only Mysore but the Company's districts of Bellary and Cuddapah bordering on Mysore had also been affected by this tendency. While affecting the finances this fall in prices had also told on the material condition of the cultivators and had become a prominent cause of discontent among them. It had also led to a demand for a reduction of assessment in Mysore. (3)

Besides the financial distress of the government the administration of Mysore was corrupt and afforded little protection to the people against the conduct of public officers. Bribery was rampant and public offices were given to persons offering the largest bribes. "All the better class of offices," wrote General Briggs in 1833, "were sold to the highest

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(1) Resident to Enquiry Committee, 19 Sept.1833, Home Misc.Series.Vol.709.

(2) Resident to Govt., 8 June 1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 26 Dec.1828.No.7.

(3) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.



bidder, or a certain share of the emoluments of each place was paid to the ministers and favourites at Court, the chief of whom was a fiddler." Thus the office of Faujdar came to be purchased for 5,000 rupees and that of Mamlatdar for 1,000. (1) The public functionaries who obtained their appointments in this manner were led to commit every species of extortion to gain wealth during their uncertain office. (2)

While the public offices were thus dispensed the system of realising the revenues led to the victimisation and impoverishment of the people, producing in turn discontent against the government of the day. Under this system an agreement was made with the Amildars whereby they engaged themselves to realise for the state a certain amount of revenue. If their collections fell short of the stipulated amount they had to make good the deficiency, and if there was any surplus it went to the state. Though the system was not unknown in the time of Purnaiya it came to be followed generally during the personal rule of the Raja. It encouraged the Amildars to make arbitrary assessments and overrate the produce of the land. These evil results were aggravated when the Amildars began to be removed as soon as other persons came forward to realise for the state a larger amount. Thus it happened that in the same year in which an agreement was made with an Amildar, if some other person came forward with a higher offer the incumbent was removed and the latter installed in his place. In the precarious tenure of his office it became the chief object of an Amildar to collect all the money he could by every means at his

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(1) Evans Bell, Memoir of General Briggs, 144-146.

(2) Col. Woulfe, to Enquiry Committee, 30 April 1833, Home Misc. Series, Vol. 709. p.1016.

disposal. In practice the system degenerated into the farming out of the revenues to the highest bidder and tended to make the government highly unpopular. (1) The main cause of the rising in Mysore in 1830 was ascribed by the resident to this unchecked "system of bribery on the nomination to amildaries" which led to the appointment of most unfit persons to those offices. (2)

While no impetus was afforded to agriculture under such circumstances, trade was hampered by the vexatious system of duties known as Sayer. They were classified under three heads, (a) transit duty on goods passing along the roads, (b) duty on goods produced or manufactured in towns or other places to be paid previous to their exportation from the place of production or manufacture (c) duty on goods at the time of their sale. For the collection of these duties 761 custom houses were maintained and at no two such houses was the same system in force. Each custom house had come to have a set of its own rates which were hardly realised without a wrangle. Merchants wishing to avoid embarrassing inconvenience and delay found it necessary to bribe almost every Sayer servant along the whole line of the road by which their merchandise passed. Exemptions granted by the government to favoured individuals added to the confusion. Trade had become virtually "monopolised by the Sayer Contractors or their servants, and a few practised traders, who were in close alliance with them or knew how to command powerful interests at the Durbar." (3)

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- (1) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.
  - (2) Resident to Madras Govt., 8 Jan.1831, Beng.Pol.Cons. 11 Feb.1831. No.6.
  - (3) Memorandum on the Sayer System in Mysore compiled by the Mysore Commissioners Office, 3.

The difficulties of the merchants and of the people in general were further increased by the absence of any developed means of communication. There was hardly any good road in Mysore; such as there were "had become impassable, and in some cases altogether obliterated from jungle having overgrown them." Three roads that could be so called were in a neglected state, with portions running through swamps. (1)

In the revenue system further, there was a large number of items of taxation which, though not heavy in amount, had become odious to the people because of the powers they gave to the Ijaradars and their agents of prying into the private affairs of the people. From these items of taxation some ten lakhs and twenty three thousand rupees were realised annually. In the "Memorandum on the Sayer System in Mysore" their number is estimated at 769. Their vexatious nature can be known from the fact that people had to pay them "on a female attaining puberty; on a child being born; on its being given a name; and on its head being shaved; on a death of a member of a family --- Umbrellas were taxed; and any one passing a particular spot in Nuggur without keeping his arms close to his side had to pay a tax for swinging his hands. There was one village whose inhabitants had to pay tax because their ancestors had failed to find the stray horse of an ancient Poligar ---".(2)

The administration of justice also was in a sad condition. Towards the close of the Raja's administration there had remained little

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- (1) Charles Green, Memorandum on Public Works in Mysore, in Selections from the Records of Mysore Commissioners Office. Collection VII, p.1.  
 (2) Memorandum on the Sayer System in Mysore, compiled by the Mysore Commissioner's Office, 5.

that could be fittingly termed an administration of justice. This department like other branches of administration had come to be affected by corruption and the capriciousness of the Raja. It had become a common thing for the Raja to issue orders dispensing with the decrees of the Sadr Court at the capital. It was also said that sometimes the Raja would pass as many as four or five contradictory decrees successively in the same suit in addition to the original decree of the Court under the influence of different parties at the royal court. The minions of the Darbar also interfered with the working of the courts and tried to influence their decisions by unfair means. At times the Raja would go so far as to abuse a judge of the Sadr Court in the open Darbar, call him names and dismiss him from his presence. (1) Little independence or integrity could be expected from the judges under these circumstances.

The administration of criminal justice was in as unsatisfactory a state as that of the civil branch. It provided little security to the persons or property of the people. The public officers were often in league with the criminals. They connived at their activities and shared their plunder. Thus notorious criminals and brigands committed outrages with impunity while the innocent became the scapegoats. At the time of British intervention in 1831 the prisons contained many who had been confined for no good reason. "For the last ten or twelve years," stated Briggs, "there has been scarcely a shadow of justice." (2) Such as did exist served to demoralise public servants. The Amildars when charged with corruption or

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(1) M. Cubbon, Report on the Civil and Criminal Judicature in Mysore, p.7.

(2) Briggs, quoted in the Madras governor's minute of 26 Oct. 1832. Board's Collections. Vol.1393.

neglect of duty were subjected to great humiliation and were occasionally flogged for the recovery of the balances due from them. But they were not considered disgraced and were often reappointed to their offices. "The natural consequence of this was the extinction of all self-respect and honourable feeling among the public servants." (1)

The government of the Raja, in short, as Bentinck stated in a despatch to the Directors in 1834, did not deserve that name, "under which there was devised no check to extortion, and no redress of grievances, which provided neither limit to the oppressor nor refuge for the oppressed." (2)

The misgovernment of the Raja had produced discontent throughout the country. But its effects had come to be felt more strongly in the north-western district of Nagar than in any other part of Mysore. This district had been among the territorial conquests of Haidar Ali and had not belonged to the ancient Hindu royal family which was restored in Mysore in 1799. Although it formed a part of the territory restored to the Raja in 1799 the people here had no deep-rooted attachment to the royal family to prevent them from taking arms against the Raja's neglect and

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(1) Cubbon, Report on Civil and Criminal Judicature in Mysore, 14.  
 (2) India Pol. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No 1. para. 26. Vol. 1.

misgovernment. (1) In this district also all important public offices had been monopolised by the Brahmans and their supremacy was supported at the court by Bakshi Ram Rao (2) and his group there. The ascendancy of this caste at the court and in the district was disliked by the majority of the people of this division who belonged to the sect of the Lingayats.(3)

While the influence of Bakshi Ram Rao and his group remained supreme at the court much misrule and oppression prevailed there. There was little security of life and property and crimes were numerous. The collusion of brigands with the public functionaries made their apprehension and punishment difficult. The nature of the country, covered as it was with dense forests and mountains, afforded encouragement and facilities to daring robberies which came to be increasingly committed.(4)

Towards the close of the Raja's administration the people here came to be particularly vexed by the arbitrary demands of public officers and were left without means of redress. These officers were generally persons who had obtained appointments by spending large sums of money in gaining favour and during their uncertain period of power they tried to

(1) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit;  
Madras governor, minute, 12 April 1831, Madras Sec.Cons.19 April 1831.  
No.2.

S.R.Lushington was governor of Madras from 1827 to 1832.

(2) A Maratha Brahman who had served in different positions and had acquired great influence at the court.

(3) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

(4) *ibid.*

hoard money unscrupulously. (1) "----there seemed to be a confederated system of oppression among all classes of the native authorities from the Patel to the District Amildar, on the one hand, and of total disregard of all complaints on the other." (2) The nature of the grievances of the people, as described by Colonel Woulfe, Captain Hutchinson, Major Clemons and others who took part in putting down the insurrection, was that nearly double the amount of the regulated Kist was demanded, the failure of which was visited with arbitrary fines or with cruel punishments such as being made to sit naked upon heated stones, that supplies of forage, wood, and other articles were required to be furnished by villages under the plea of being for the use of the troops, and that their representations were not attended to. (3) Though the demands of the government were not particularly heavy or oppressive, this did not prevent the public servants from exacting large amounts from the people and from enriching themselves at their expense. "The tyranny under Purnayya," it has been observed by a modern writer, "was Purnayya's own, while the tyranny under the maharaja was that of his servants. In any case, the net result to the people was the same." (4) By 1830 the division of Nagar had been reduced

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(1) Col.Woulfe to Enquiry Committee, 30 April 1833, Home Misc.Series.  
Vol.709. p.1016.

He was employed against the insurgents.

(2) Major J. Clemons, evidence on 13 May 1833, Home Misc.Series.Vol.709.p.1050.  
He also took part in putting down the insurrection.

(3) Home Misc.Series. Vol.709. pp.1012-1023; 1045-1055, 1672-1682.

(4) K.N.V. Sastri, The Administration of Mysore under Sir Mark Cubbon,  
(1834-61), 236.

to a melancholy state.

For many years past arrears of revenue and defalcations on the part of public servants had been accumulating in Nagar. They had neither been collected nor remitted. In 1827 Bakshi Ram Rao was deputed to investigate the outstanding balances of revenue amounting to upwards of 13 lakhs of rupees. The Bakshi made recommendations for remissions of nearly seven and a half lakhs of rupees. He prepared a list separating the balances that were recoverable from those that should be obliterated by the government. The Raja at first concurred in the propriety of these remissions, but subsequently, under the influence of other advisers, changed his opinion. He suspended their confirmation, and in December 1828 removed the Faujdar Kishan Rao from his office on a charge of inactivity in the collection of recoverable balances and sent one Vira Raj Arus for the task. Vira Raj started making enquiries into the balances and found that much fraud had been practised in the remissions. His enquiries were calculated to arouse the fears of such Amildars and other officers as were guilty of embezzling money and whose self-interest was thus involved in the removal of the Faujdar. The suspension of the remissions and the attempt to recover the balances also excited resentment among the people, who would ultimately be most affected. It was stated to be "a prominent cause of discontent" by the resident. (1) For once the interest of the people and the subordinate officers were united. Together they worked to create a disturbed situation revealing the incompetence of the Faujdar.

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(1) Resident to Enquiry Committee, 19 Sept. 1833, Home Misc. Series. Vol. 709. p. 1699;

Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.



In July 1830 a plot was formed among the Amildars for effecting the removal of Vira Raj. (1) They encouraged the inhabitants to assemble in meetings to make complaints. A pretender was also set up as the "Nuggur Khavind" (Lord or Sovereign of Nagar) and in several parts of the district the people assembled and first defied the authority of the government in August and September 1830. In November, Vira Raj was dismissed in consequence of the disturbed state in which he was said to have thrown the district. (2)

The pretender was a notorious character originally known as Sadar Malla. He had been twice imprisoned for robbery. He had acquired a signet of the last Raja of Nagar from an old religious mendicant who had been that Raja's spiritual guide. On the basis of that signet he duped the ignorant and the credulous into believing that he was a descendant of the old royal family. He had also managed to secure a pass from a district court of the Company in which he was described by the name he had assumed "Budi Basavappa, Nagar Khavind." In 1830 his marriage was solemnised, and in an official document issued by an Amildar Lakshman Rao the impostor was styled the Raja of Nagar. The principal men of the village were asked to make preparations for his marriage ceremony. Shortly afterwards another ceremony was held attended by several Patels in which the pretensions of Budi Basavappa were formally recognised and his appellation accepted. He was called the Raja of Nagar. "While all this was going on," observed a witness, "the government Amildars were aware of it; but remained quiet,

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(1) Resident to Enquiry Committee, 8 Jan. 1833, Home Misc. Series. Vol. 709

(2) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

therefore the people not being kept in awe by the public functionaries commenced the rebellion." (1) In the ensuing months the agents of Budi Basavappa busied themselves instigating the people against the government and asking them to support him. (2)

This conspiracy, though formed with the immediate object of securing the removal of the Faujdar, was undermining the authority of the government and should have been early broken by prompt action. But because of the "Rajah's apathy and procrastination it was allowed to progress and the other Talooks adjoining united without being enabled to assign any other motive for showing resistance than the example and demand of the neighbouring ryots for their assistance, and disaffection became too general." (3) There were encounters between the Raja's forces and the insurgents. At one place the number of persons gathered to defy the authority of the government ranged between 6,000 and 20,000. The insurgents soon began to espouse the cause of Budi Basavappa openly. (4)

About the middle of December 1830 another leader of the insurgents Rangapah Naik joined the main body of the Nagar insurgents with his son and nephew. In a short time he took possession of two hill forts in Eastern Nagar. (5)

In the meantime the unrest spread to other districts of Mysore

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- (1) Ramiah, evidence on 14 March 1833, Home Misc.Seris.Vol.709. p. 499.
  - (2) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op. cit.
  - (3) Resident to Govt., 8 Jan.1831, Beng.Pol.Cons. 11 Feb.1831, No.6.
  - (4) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.
  - (5) ibid.

also (Chitaldroog and Bangalore.) (1)

The Raja was slow in perceiving the danger even after the disturbances had become serious. He was persuaded by the resident to make a tour of the disturbed areas to pacify the minds of the people. (2) He set out on this journey from his capital on 13 December. On his way he received various complaints from the people of the oppression of public officers which he enquired into and redressed. On 18 December he reached Chenroyapatam where he found the shops closed and the supplies for his retinue refused. The next day people showed their lack of respect for him by beating drums and blowing horns. These acts of disrespect were severely punished. (3) The visit of the Raja, much as the resident wished it, was not extended to other areas, and he returned to Mysore on 10 January 1831. The resident ascribed the Raja's return to weakness of character - his "dissolute and timid" nature - an indisposition to further exertion or "to be longer absent from the allurements of his Palace," (4) but it could well have been a recognition that the situation had got out of hand.

At this period the insurrection had taken an organised form and the incapacity of the Raja's troops to cope with it had become apparent. The new Faujdar of Nagar sent with forces to control the situation, found himself opposed on all sides and after having fought the insurgents bravely

- (1) *ibid.*
- (2) Resident to Govt., 11 Sept. 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 15 Oct.1832, No.21.
- (3) Report of the Enquiry Committee, *op.cit.*
- (4) Resident to Govt., 11 Sept. 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 15 Oct. 1832. No. 21.

was obliged to fall back. An effort by Raja's troops to capture the fort of Kamandurg held by the insurgents also failed. (1)

These reverses led to the employment by the resident of a portion of the Company's subsidiary force maintained in Mysore. After the employment of these bodies a number of engagements were fought and the insurgents beaten. But the insurrection held its own in certain areas, and hence led to the employment of the subsidiary force in larger numbers. Against these, the insurgents fought a losing battle and the insurrection began to peter out. After the capture of the town of Nagar on 6 June 1831 it was not considered necessary to detain the British force, and with the exception of a small detachment, it was sent back to its quarters. The Raja's troops were broken up into four divisions for establishing confidence among the people and to suppress a small body of insurgents who under the direction of Rangapah Naik and Surjapah Naik continued to have encounters with the Raja's forces. Matters were in this state when the interference of British government placed the country under British management.

British relations with Mysore were under the immediate control of the government of Madras. But the outbreak of the insurrection, which necessitated the employment of the Company's forces, led Bentinck to interfere personally and to take over the whole administration even when such a course

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(1) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

was not recommended by the government of Madras. During the insurrection the governor of Madras, who considered it to be a serious matter, visited Mysore in person in order to ascertain the real state of affairs. The rising, he said in his minute of 12 April 1831, required the special attention and intervention of the British government. It had, he pointed out, affected the adjoining province of Canara in the possession of the Company, and proved the incompetence of the Raja to govern his country. The policy of the British government, he said, had been for a long time to leave the affairs of Mysore to be governed by the Raja alone, but now such a course had become impossible. The insurrection was subversive of all "the principles of policy, justice and moderation" by which the Raja was placed on the throne in 1799 by the British government. The treaty had been meant to secure for the British government and its allies permanent peace and tranquillity in and outside Mysore, and now it stood violated and showed the need for British intervention. (1)

What was, however, actually contemplated by Lushington was the assumption of the district of Nagar, where there had been a strong resistance to the Raja's forces. Here petitions from various inhabitants and the reports of the resident had shown that "the spirit of hatred and revenge had been so much excited as not to admit of any real reconciliation between the people of Nuggur and His Highness's government." (2)

In another minute of 4 July 1831 Lushington further urged the need for intervention. The situation in Mysore, he said, had created a real

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(1) Lushington, minute, 12 April 1831, Madras Sec.Cons. 19 April 1831. No.2.  
 (2) *ibid.*

apprehension for the subsidy paid by the state to the British government and thereby established a strong case for intervention which was clearly warranted by the treaty of 1799. It was further stated that the payment of the subsidy had been delayed beyond the appointed period and that the troops and civil servants were in a discontented state. (1)

In this minute of 4 July another form of intervention suggested by the resident in Mysore was recommended for the favourable consideration of the Supreme Government. It was the appointment of a Dewan supported by the British government and working in collaboration with the resident. The resident at the time who had made this suggestion was J.A.Casamaijor. He had acted as resident since 1825 and thus had had a good opportunity of knowing the Raja well. The Raja, according to him, was not wilfully cruel or oppressive, "no faults of any malignity" could be ascribed to him. "In his personal character as Sovereign he is proverbially generous and humane to his people." His chief shortcomings were "his habitual extravagance, indolence and a total incapacity to that continued exertion so essential to the conduct of duties of government ----" And so Casamaijor considered the Raja fitted to act only as the nominal head while all the powers of government would be in fact exercised by a Dewan appointed by the British government and working conjointly with the resident. And he felt confident that the affairs of Mysore could be restored by such an

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(1) Lushington, minute, 4 July 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 7 Oct. 1831. No.6.

arrangement. (1)

Bentinck could not accept either of Lushington's suggestions. The facts of the situation, in his opinion, called for strong action. These were that the Raja had spent all the treasure left by Purnaiya and was wasting public resources in useless grants of lands. He was indifferent to the welfare of the people and had allowed them to suffer grievously. The people, finding no redress for their grievances, had risen in desperation. When the Raja's forces failed to cope with the rising that spread to about half of his dominions, the Company's forces were sent to control the situation. The British government which suppressed the people must see justice done to them. His policy was to leave the states full freedom of action. But if a state so left to itself failed "to acquit itself of the obligation it is under to its subjects, to provide for them a decent administration; if instead of order, tranquillity and security to life and prosperity, disorganisation prevail in all departments with insurrection, disturbance, violence, plundering and bloodshed," the proper course was to substitute British authority entirely in all the departments of government. (2)

This principle was to be applied to Mysore. The reports of the resident showed the condition of Mysore to be such as to merit the full application of this principle. Hence Bentinck could not accept the measure proposed by Lushington - "the assumption and temporary management of the

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(1) *ibid*;

Resident to Govt., 28 June 1831, Enclos. to Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. Vol. 40;

Resident to Govt., 20 July 1831, Madras Sec. Cons. 27 Sept. 1831. No. 2.

(2) Gov.-Gen's Sec. to Madras Govt., 8 June 1831, Madras Sec. Cons.

4 Oct. 1831. No. 3.

disturbed districts." If there was ground for the assumption of a part of Bentinck was of opinion that the same ground warranted the assumption of the whole. (1)

The appointment of a Dewan by the British government was equally objectionable to Bentinck. It was a partial measure and not likely to be effective for the disordered condition of Mysore. An able and experienced Dewan suited to the task might not be found easily. Further such an arrangement, in which the Dewan exercised his authority conjointly with the resident, would create dual control and responsibility. If they did not agree with each other the way might be opened for confusion and embarrassment. (2)

Such an arrangement to Bentinck had also an appearance of a concealment of British authority which might create a misunderstanding of British intentions. Once the need for British intervention was clearly established it was necessary that such interference was "open and avowed," and that its "method and form" had no "appearance of an insidious character." Bentinck was anxious that British intervention "should not seem as if adopted as a step to something else." (3) Hence he resolved to order the assumption of the whole country and to deprive the Raja of all the powers of government by vesting the entire administration in a commission of two British officers.

The letter of notice required for such a course by the treaty

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) Bentinck to Lushington, 5 Sept. 1831, Madras Sec. Cons. 4 Oct. 1831. No. 4.

(3) Beng. Sec. Letters recd. 6 Sept. 1831. para. 5.



of 1799 was sent to the Madras government for submission to the Raja. In this letter Bentinck told the Raja that the assumption had been ordered for the vindication of British justice, which required that the British government should provide redress to the people whom it had reduced to submission. The assumption, the Raja was told, had also been ordered with reference to the terms of the treaty and on account of the protective character of the British government towards Mysore. (1)

On account of misgovernment in several states Bentinck was at this time entertaining an extended conception of British obligations. He thought that the British government as the paramount power in India could in the last resort interfere vigorously in a state irrespective of treaty stipulations. (2) The insurrection in Mysore, producing an extreme situation, left Bentinck in no doubt <sup>about</sup> the justice of the assumption from any point of view. Hence he acted promptly and vigorously.

The Raja received Bentinck's letter while celebrating a Hindu festival. He was struck with remorse on knowing Bentinck's decision but decided on surrendering his authority without any protest or resistance. (3)

So the transfer of power was easy. A commission of two officers (4) was appointed, and it assumed charge on 20 October 1831. Of the two commissioners, the senior, Colonel John Briggs, was appointed by Bentinck,

- (1) Bentinck to Raja, 7 Sept. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 7 Oct. 1831. No. 10.
- (2) Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2.
- (3) Resident to Govt., 11 Oct. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 4 Nov. 1831. No. 14.
- (4) Lushington (commissioner) to Govt., 20 Oct. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 18 Nov. 1831. No. 8.

and the junior, C.M.Lushington (1) of the Madras Civil Service, by the governor of Madras, S.R. Lushington. The Raja was provided with a sum of one lakh of star pagodas per annum plus one fifth of the net revenue of Mysore, as stipulated by the treaty of 1799. (2)

The scheme of two commissioners appointed by two governments could not work. A complex situation developed. There were differences of opinion and friction between the two commissioners. Bentinck's instructions were interpreted differently by the government of Madras. The governor of Madras was at loggerheads with the senior commissioner, who complained of a combination of the government of Madras, the junior commissioner and the resident against him. Both in official and private correspondence charges and countercharges were made and Bentinck felt ill at ease (3) He resolved in 1832 to place Mysore under the immediate superintendence of the Supreme Government, but that did not bring to an end the differences between the commissioners, or the ill feeling between the commission and the residency. (4) Bentinck was much embarrassed by these controversies. "Mysore," he wrote to Ravenshaw, "has dreadfully plagued me, but having got rid both of Briggs and Lushington, I trust things will go on better for the

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- (1) Brother of the governor of Madras.
  - (2) Bentinck to Raja, 7 Sept.1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 7 Oct.1831. No. 10.
  - (3) Briggs to Bentinck, 16 Jan.1832, Bentinck Papers;  
Lushington (governor) to Bentinck, 19 April 1832. *ibid*;  
Briggs, minute, 6 Jan.1832, Briggs's Papers, ff. 17-23, (Ms.Eng.his.c.334);  
Lushington, minute, 9 Jan.1832, *ibid*. ff. 23-26;  
Briggs, rejoinder, 12 Jan.1832, *ibid*. ff. 27-36.
  - (4) E. Bell, Memoir of General John Briggs, 158-206.

future." (1) He felt that the party spirit and jealousy which he had seen thirty years ago in Madras was still rampant there. (2) In 1834, in accordance with the orders of the Directors, a single commissioner was appointed by Bentinck. He was Colonel W. Morison of the Madras Military Service. (3)

In 1832 Bentinck instituted a committee consisting of Major General Thomas Hawker, J.M. Macleod, Lieutenant Colonel W. Morison and Lieutenant Colonel Mark Cubbon to frame a report on "the origin, progress and suppression of the recent disturbances in Mysore including a detail of the consequences by which they may have been attended as affecting the lives and property of the people of the country." His motive in forming the committee was, in his words, "to obtain the fullest and most accurate report which shall be subject to no imputation of partiality." (4) The report of the committee was sent to the Supreme Government in December 1833 and was based on an examination of all documents that could afford light on the subject and on a large body of evidence collected by it. (5)

The report had a considerable influence in changing the mind of Bentinck in favour of the Raja. It furnished facts which, Bentinck said

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- (1) Bentinck to Ravenshaw, 11 Dec. 1832, Bentinck Papers.  
Lushington left the commission in the beginning of 1832. Briggs's resignation was accepted in November 1832.
  - (2) Bentinck to Stewart, 29 April 1834, Bentinck Papers.
  - (3) Bengal Despatches, 6 March 1833, No. 7. Vol. 122;  
India Pol. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834, No. 1. Vol. I.
  - (4) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 22 June 1832.
  - (5) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

in his despatch to the Directors of 14 April 1834, were calculated to surprise the Directors no less than him. (1)

First and foremost was the statement that the circumstances of the ryots had greatly deteriorated during the administration of Dewan Purnaiya. "Accustomed as I had always been to hear the administration of that able man mentioned in terms of unqualified praise, I confess that I was forcibly struck with this assertion though I cannot doubt its accuracy." (2) It was further stated by the committee that the amassing of a large sum of money exceeding two crores of rupees by Purnaiya could not be regarded as having contributed to the prosperity of the people. It could not but have operated as if Mysore during his administration had "exported annually seven lacs of canteroy pagodas (upwards of twenty lacs of rupees) to a foreign country whence <sup>no</sup> ~~te~~ part of it returned," (3)

The second fact in the report which appeared "remarkable" to Bentinck was that as early as 1813 the resident had reported to the government the "intolerable vices and corruptions" of the Raja's rule and that similar complaints had been repeated from that time to the period of assumption. But the British government had not only not intervened, it had in 1814 asked the resident "to abstain from the public reception of complaints from the subjects of Mysore and from the avowed support of the cause of those whose grievances might become known to him." (4)

The Raja at the time of his accession, the report stated was a

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- (1) India Pol. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No. 1. Vol. I.
  - (2) *ibid.*
  - (3) Report of the Enquiry Committee, *op.cit.*
  - (4) India Pol. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No. 1. Vol. I.

boy of 16 years. His early education had been neglected, his company was of low and profligate persons and he had in consequence acquired bad habits. These circumstances entitled him to special care and protection. It was necessary that the personal exercise of the powers of government he had assumed in 1811 should be watched and his extravagance checked. It seemed particularly advisable because it was warranted by the treaty of 1799 which brought him to the throne. In the words of the committee, this treaty not only committed "the defence and security of the country to the Honourable Company," but also placed the "civil administration of its affairs completely under the control and direction of the Company's government." It was, the committee pointed out, not only in case of extreme misgovernment that the British government was authorised to interfere. Intervention was also meant to be exercised for introducing improvements into every branch of the administration. And it was therefore hoped by Lord Wellesley, who framed this treaty of 1799, that the necessity for depriving the Raja of all the powers of government would never arise. (1)

It was also stated by the committee that the decline of revenue in the time of the Raja's period of power was not ascribable exclusively

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(1) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

The memorandum explanatory of the treaty expressing Wellesley's intentions stated that articles 4 and 5 of the treaty secured to "the Company the power not only of assuming the management of the Raja's revenues either in time of peace or war, whenever such a measure may appear necessary, but also of introducing any improvements into any or each of the Raja's administration (sic), which the Governor-General in Council may deem advisable. It may, therefore, be hoped that it will not be necessary to resort to the extreme measure of assuming the Raja's country. The powers both of regulation and assumption are secured in the most unqualified manner for the purpose of avoiding the embarrassments which have occasioned so much inconvenience in Oude, Tanjore and the Carnatic."

"Memorial explanatory of the Subsidiary Treaty of Mysore." Home Misc. Series, Vol. 635. p. 200.

to misgovernment. It had also been effected by a fall in the price of agricultural produce which meant a corresponding diminution of revenue, by a reduction of the number of British forces stationed in Mysore, and by the end of the predatory character of the Mysore state after its conquest by the British in 1799. (1)

The report of the committee showed that the policy of non-intervention followed with regard to Mysore for a long period was a departure from the letter of the treaty of 1799 and the intentions of its author. To Bentinck it could not have failed to show the inadequacy of his views as set down in the despatch to the government of Madras dated 8 June 1831, in which his policy was described as one of non-interference until disorganisation and disturbance compelled the British government to supersede the authority of the ruler entirely (p. 62). This view could hardly be said to apply to the Company's connexion with Mysore. Between the two extremes contemplated by Bentinck, the treaty of 1799, the report served to show conclusively, had been especially designed to ensure good government without entailing the entire suppression of the ruler's authority.

Soon after receiving the report of the committee Bentinck paid a visit to Mysore. He had intended to do so soon after placing Mysore under the direct control of the Supreme Government in 1832 but various difficulties from time to time prevented him, and it was only in February 1834 that his visit could materialize. He found matters in Mysore in a settled state and the routine of business carried on with regularity. After staying at

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(1) Report of the Enquiry Committee, op.cit.

Bangalore for a number of days he proceeded to Mysore. (1) Here he met the Raja and was favourably impressed by him. He considered him "intelligent and sensible" and his disposition the reverse of "tyrannical and cruel." (2) At the meeting the Raja protested in person that he had always been devoted to the British cause. Prinsep considered the "circumstances of his elevation" a sufficient guarantee for his attachment. (3) Bentinck was also impressed by his faithfulness and wrote subsequently to the Directors that whatever his past errors might have been he had "never forgotten his obligation and duties to the Company's government." (4) The Raja had been careful in the discharge of his financial obligations to the Company, as stipulated in the treaty of 1799. The Mysore commissioners testified that "the fixed sum of twenty four lacs and fifty thousand rupees has been paid annually for the last thirty years from the Mysore resources on account of the Madras Government and that the payment has been made by monthly instalments of Rs. 204,166. That this should be done is stipulated by the treaty of Seringapatam." (5)

From Mysore, Bentinck went to Ootacumund in the Nilgiri hills for reasons of health, and there found leisure to think over Mysore affairs. By this time he had begun to feel that he had not been just to the Raja in having ordered the assumption of the whole country. He had also begun to feel that he had not given the Raja a definite warning that his country

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(1) India Pol.Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No. 1. Vol. I.

(2) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834.

(3) Prinsep, H.T., History of the Political and Military Transactions in India

(4) Beng. and India Sec.Letters Recd. 14 April 1834.

( I, 16.

(5) Commission to Madras Govt., 19 July 1832, Board's Collections.Vol.1393.

would be assumed if his neglect continued. Perhaps the Raja had believed sincerely that in the last resort his misgovernment could be punished by the nomination of a Dewan supported by British authority. The Raja's mind, according to the resident, had "for years past been prepared to expect that the British government would eventually resort to the experiment of constituting a Dewan vested with adequate authority to collect and divert the management of the revenues in Mysore and the payment of establishments." (1)

From Ootacamund Bentinck wrote two despatches bearing the same date viz, 14 April 1834, one addressed to the Court of Directors and the other to the Secret Committee. In the former he expressed his views on the circumstances which had led to his assuming the powers of government and the plan of administration to be adopted in Mysore. (2) In the latter he suggested an alternative which he thought preferable to assumption and advantageous both to the British government and to the Raja. The alternative proposed was that the divisions of Nagar, Chitaldroog and Bangalore, or more, if necessary to yield an annual revenue of 13 lakhs of pagodas should be ceded to the British government and the remainder, namely the divisions of Ashtagram, Manjarabad and Kasba Mysore should be restored to the Raja under securities for good government. (3) Urging the acceptance of his proposal Bentinck wrote:

(1) Resident to Govt., 16 Sept. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 14 Oct. 1831. No. 27.

(2) India Pol. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No. 1. Vol. I.

(3) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834;

Despatches to India and Bengal, 25 Sept. 1835. No. 45, Vol. 6.

The pecuniary claims of the British government on Mysore amounted to 13 lakhs of pagodas.



"By the adoption of the arrangement which I advocate certain doubts will be removed which I cannot help entertaining both as to the legality and the justice, according to a strict interpretation, of the course that has been pursued. The Treaty warrants our assumption of the country with a view to secure the payment of our subsidy. The assumption was actually made on account of the Rajah's misgovernment. The subsidy does not appear to have been in any immediate jeopardy. Again the Treaty authorises us to assume such part or parts of the country as may be necessary to render the funds which we claim sufficient and available. The whole has been assumed although a part would unquestionably have sufficed for the purpose specified in the Treaty. And with regard to the justice of the case I cannot but think that it would have been more fair towards the Rajah had a more distinct and positive warning been given him that the decided measure since adopted would be put in force if misgovernment should be found to prevail."(1)

These words show a marked change in the ideas of Bentinck in regard to his interference in Mysore. In his despatch to the Secret Committee dated 6 September 1831 he had held the assumption to be fully warranted by the peculiar relations of the British government with Mysore, by the specific stipulations of the treaty of 1799 and in consequence of the misgovernment which had prevailed in Mysore. (2) In the letter to the Raja of 7 September 1831 he had stated assumption to <sup>be</sup> indispensable on these grounds. (3)

In Bentinck's letter to the Raja of 7 September 1831 the government of Madras had changed a few words to suit the terms of the treaty of 1799. In place of Bentinck's words "the subsidy due to the British government is several months in arrears," the government of Madras on enquiry substituted

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(1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. para 8.

(2) Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 6 Sept. 1831.

(3) Bentinck to Raja, 7 Sept. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 7 Oct. 1831. No. 10.

these words, "the subsidy due to the British government has not been paid monthly according to the treaty of 6 July 1799." But this "correction" appeared to Bentinck to be of no consequence. As late as June 1832 he maintained "The error, however, had little or no influence on the merits of the question as affecting my decision." (1) This further strengthens the view that the consideration of the subsidy did not weigh with him materially at the time of his deciding on the assumption of the country in September 1831. The assumption was at that time (1831) considered fully legal, just and necessary on the ground of misgovernment. It was, in addition, intended by Bentinck to be an example to the princes of India of the open and avowed nature of British intervention when necessary. (2) After having such definite views at the time of the assumption Bentinck's subsequent doubts of the legality and justice of his action seem to betray weakness and inconsistency.

The confusion will be more apparent if the words quoted (on page. 72 ) are studied closely. They suggest that the legality and justice of the assumption could not go hand-in-hand. If the basis of the assumption of a part or the whole of Mysore was only the security of the subsidy then it is clear that the assumption could not be decreed legally on other grounds. In that case a positive warning, as justice appeared to Bentinck to demand, that the assumption of the entire country would be carried out for misgovernment was misleading.

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(1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 22 June 1832.

In this letter the treaty was wrongly dated 6 July 1799 instead of 8 July 1799.

Treaties and Agreements with Country Powers in India, 1795-1802.

Home Misc. Series. Vol. 635. pp. 181-198.

(2) Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 6 Sept. 1831.

Surely the cause of Bentinck's misgiving was his realisation in the light of the enquiry committee's report that his views on the question of interference, as given in the despatch to the government of Madras of 8 June 1831 (p.62) were not applicable to Mysore. He further realised that before entirely excluding the Raja's authority he had not made use of the extensive powers of interposition vested by Lord Wellesley in the British government and especially designed to prevent assumption. The report of the committee in a definite manner pointed out the existence of those powers and their being exercised for ensuring good government. In his despatch to the Directors Bentinck himself refers (quoting the words of the enquiry committee) to "those powers of control and regulation, the exercise of which was expected by the Marquis Wellesley to prove the means of preventing any necessity for a resort to the measure of resumption---"(1) The state of Mysore at the time of its very establishment in 1799 had been so much dependent on the British government that James Mill considered the Raja and his ministers to be vicegerents of the British government. Mill even thought that the installation of the Hindu Raja on the throne was a screen to hide from European and Indian eyes the extent of British territorial aggrandizement. "It enabled the Governor-General to dismiss Nizam Ali with a much smaller share of the prey, than would have satisfied him, had the English taken without disguise the whole of what in this manner they actually appropriated." (2)

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(1) India Pol.Letters Recd. 14 April 1834. No.1. Vol.I.

(2) James Mill, The History of British India, VI, 164-165.

Lord Wellesley himself wrote to Dundas on the settlement after the conquest of Mysore "The present settlement is more gracious, and as effectual in point of real power, as that which seems to have formed the extreme point of your wishes."

Wellesley to Dundas, 29 Jan.1800, Wellesley's Despatches (Martin),II,203.

Under these circumstances it is clear that the policy of non-intervention pursued towards Mysore since 1814 was ill assorted with the Company's connexion with that state. To such an extent was this policy pursued that Casamaijor wrote in 1833 that "the Rajah's administration over his country has been totally uncontrolled by any local or presiding influence, direct or indirect" and further that "the Rajah's supremacy to exercise independent rule has never been invaded." (1) And this had been done in spite of the Raja's having never abided by his promises to amend his administration "since his first admission to exercise independent power." (2)

Thus a number of factors made Bentinck feel favourably disposed to the Raja. His omission to make use of the extensive powers of interference vested in the British government before entirely excluding the Raja from power was one consideration. Another was the Raja's attachment to the British, together with his discharge of his financial obligations. His meeting with the Raja further impressed him. He read the Raja's character in a favourable light and saw in him the ability to make a good ruler. Thus influenced, in April 1834 he recommended to his superiors the restoration of about half of Mysore to the Raja. He felt confident that the interests of the people of the restored territory would not suffer under this arrangement, and that the Raja would not fail to bring his good qualities into active use. "The personal character of

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(1) Resident to Enquiry Committee, 19 Sept. 1833, Home Misc.Series. Vol.709.  
p.1693.

(2) *ibid.* p. 1691.

the Rajah," he told his superiors, "has I confess materially weighed with me in recommending the measure above adverted to." (1)

The Directors, however, could not share his optimism about the future conduct of the Raja and held more consistently that "the same reasons which serve to recommend the restoration to the Raja of a portion of the country, will in our opinion, recommend the restoration of the whole." (2) Their adverse decision was received after Bentinck's return.

To conclude, on finding misgovernment in Mysore in an acute form and insurrection in one half of his dominions, Bentinck became convinced of the need to supersede the Raja's authority. Such a step he considered to be fully warranted by the treaty of 1799 and by the protective character of the British government towards Mysore. However, the report of the committee which he had appointed to report on the insurrection brought about a change in his views. He came to see that between the two extremes of intervention and non-intervention he had not made use of the extensive powers of interference vested in the British government by Lord Wellesley. He realised also that his general ideas on the question of interference did not suit the Company's connexion with Mysore. This omission on the part of his predecessors, and no less of himself, to have used those powers before assumption, combined with the Raja's attachment and discharge of his financial obligations, caused Bentinck some misgiving. He felt that he had not been just to the Raja in having deprived him of all the powers of government without a positive warning. On meeting the Raja, he read

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(1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834.

(2) Despatches to India and Bengal, 25 Sept. 1835. No.45. Vol. 6.

his character favourably and felt sure that he would not fail to benefit from his past errors and make a good ruler in the future. Feeling confidence in the Raja's future good behaviour he recommended to his superiors the restoration of a part of Mysore to him. He did not fear that the interests of the people in the restored territory would suffer and he looked hopefully to the acceptance of his plan by the home government. But this attitude, and the proposal in which it resulted, while showing his uprightness in the highest degree, was an indication of the weakness of his position and was not accepted by the home authorities.

## CHAPTER IV

BENTINCK AND NON-INTERVENTION

The instances of Nagpur, Oudh and Hyderabad show that Bentinck had conceived a radical solution of the problem of the Indian states. He not only did not interfere in Oudh where misgovernment had existed for a long period but he also withdrew British control from Nagpur and Hyderabad in the hope that these princes when left to themselves would sincerely seek to advance the welfare of their subjects. This attitude of allowing these princes internal freedom was characteristic of his general conduct towards the states.

Bentinck's aim in his relations with the Indian states was to secure reform by the princes through their own officers. This appeared to him to be the most satisfactory way of setting things right. He felt that if the princes had the maximum amount of internal freedom they could not fail to be influenced by their vast power of doing good to their subjects. The sheer weight of such responsibility appeared to

him to be an effective antidote against pleasure-seeking and capricious use of authority. An active policy of intervention was ruled out. It produced bitterness, discord and dual control. It worked when the ruler was a minor as in Mysore (under Purnaiya) and Nagpur or when the ruler had been deprived of all effective authority as in Hyderabad. Even when it brought about improvement through European agency it could not, he thought, be a permanent arrangement. It left the Indian state only a nominal existence and was not conducive to the growth of co-operation, goodwill and understanding on which he wanted to build British relations with the Indian states.<sup>(1)</sup>

He was no admirer of the personal character and accomplishments of the Indian princes many of whom were seen to be extravagant and indifferent to the welfare of their subjects. But he believed that if they were given full power and responsibility the result would be favourable. Such a belief appeared to emerge from his faith in human nature and its capacity for

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 15 Nov. 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
27 Nov. 1829. No.39.



advance by education and training. He thought that the human mind was in no way static and he found the character of the people of India changing and susceptible of improvement.<sup>(1)</sup> The same belief made him look on the princes as capable of being transformed into benevolent sovereigns if properly influenced. His tours in India strengthened him in thinking of establishing closer contact with the Indian princes as a mode of influencing their conduct. In a letter to Grant from the western provinces he writes:

"I am glad to think that the personal intercourse with the chiefs themselves and a quick and easy interchange of opinions with them upon all public subjects which my residence in these provinces has enabled me to hold has greatly tended to improve our mutual relations. They have had the opportunity of better knowing our intentions, confidence has been strengthened, and measures as much for their benefit as ours have been carried through friendly explanation. One of these has been, upon a simple invitation, an almost general consent... to abolish the traffic in slaves which has been carried on to a great extent in these upper parts of India, particularly in young girls...I have also had the opportunity of putting a stop to the improper interference exercised by our agents in the affairs of these chiefs, derogatory to their independence and opposed to our true policy. My idea is that the greater our power is, and it is by all acknowledged to be paramount and irresistible,

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 30 May 1829, P.P. 1831-32, VIII, General Appendix, 276.

the more carefully concealed should be its display on the part of our agents, but they all like to play the king."<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck hoped much from influencing the princes by closer contact. At an early period of his administration he urged the transfer of the seat of government to some point in the western provinces which would among other things enable the Supreme Government to establish a better communication with the princes. His proposal was rejected but he urged the change again on several occasions.<sup>(2)</sup>

When giving his opinion on the subject of the constitution of the Indian government he stated the advantages of Allahabad as the seat of the Supreme Government in the following words:

"No spot presents so many advantages for direct control, and for ready intercourse with the most distant Provinces, and for the despatch of all business, as Allahabad. I annex to this Minute a Map showing its contiguity to our most important affairs. It is immediately adjacent to Oude, to the Saugor and Nerbudda territories, to Bundelcund; it has under its eye the revenue settlements of the Upper Provinces...Gwalior, Malwa and Rajpootana are all brought within easy

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(1) Bentinck to Grant, 22 Dec. 1832, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Bengal Despatches, 3 July 1829, Vol. III; Dalhousie, memorandum on the removal of government dated 15 March 1830, Bentinck Papers.

means of immediate superintendence, and of personal communication if necessary." (1)

That the princes enjoying internal freedom should in close association with the British government sincerely improve the condition of their people was Bentinck's main hope. In pursuit of that aim he would make full allowance for the shortcomings of the princes and carry non-intervention to great lengths.

The case of Nagpur elicited Bentinck's most optimistic hopes and saw their comparative fulfilment. In 1818, after the defeat and deposition of Appa Sahib in the last Maratha war, the grandson of Raghuji II (1788-1816) was placed on the throne. He assumed the name of Raghuji III after the ceremony of adoption in the usual Maratha fashion. As he was a minor, affairs during his nonage were superintended by the resident with the assistance of British officers in the various

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 14 Sept. 1831, P.P. 1833, XXV (418) 54.

departments of government.<sup>(1)</sup>

This system continued till 1826, when the Raja reached his majority and a treaty was made with him to define his relations with the British government. This treaty of 1 December 1826 made British influence in the state all pervasive. The Raja surrendered some territories in perpetuity in lieu of the subsidy paid by the state for the subsidiary force.<sup>(2)</sup> He further assigned a number of districts to the British government as a guarantee for the payment of the state forces which were to be under British control. The rest of the territories were left to the Raja for direct administration with a promise that if he governed well the assigned districts would also be restored to him in the future.<sup>(3)</sup> Various limitations however upon an independent use of power by the Raja were imposed. He was required to heed British advice in matters relating to the revenues of the state, the administration of justice and police, and the regulation of commerce

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(1) R. Jenkins, Report on the Territories of the Raja of Nagpur, 1826.

R. Jenkins was resident at Nagpur from 1807 to 1827. On his retirement he became first a Director and then Chairman of the East India Company.

(2) Aitchison, Treaties, I, Treaty of 1 Dec. 1826, Article 5, 427.

(3) *ibid.* Articles 8 and 9, 428.

and industry. He was to appoint as ministers such persons as had British confidence. In all appointments to civil offices the Raja was also to be guided by the advice of the British government. In addition he was to adopt all regulations suggested by the British government for ensuring "order, economy and integrity" in every department of government.<sup>(1)</sup>

In case of mismanagement on the part of the Raja and financial confusion in the state the treaty gave the British government the right to assume part or the whole of the country.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was felt that a literal execution of the treaty would hardly leave the Raja any freedom of action whatever, and so the intention of the government was stated to be "to interfere as little as possible in the administration of public affairs."<sup>(3)</sup> This view was supported by the Directors also in their despatch of 26 November 1828. They observed that from the mere fact that these powers were possessed it did not follow

(1) *ibid.* Article 10, 428-429.

(2) *ibid.* Article 12, 429-430.

(3) Govt. to Resident, 8 Sept. 1826, Enclos. to Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. Vol. 32.

that "they should be hastily or vexatiously exercised." The right even of giving advice was to be exercised with "forbearance" so as to convince the Raja that the British government was not inclined to curb his freedom of action as long as he managed the internal affairs well.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the limited sphere allowed to the Raja, he managed the affairs of his state well, and the resident, impressed with his ability, submitted favourable reports of his character and endowments. He was described as quick, intelligent and painstaking, with a sincere desire to promote the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. He superintended the administration himself with care and efficiency and paid "continued unremitting" attention to the affairs of the state. He maintained a keen eye on the public expenditure and examined the accounts himself. On all important matters the advice of the resident was voluntarily sought and unreserved and cordial communication maintained with him. In short, the resident said, the expectations formed of the Raja seemed to have been amply fulfilled and the territories given to him could not be said to have

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(1) Bengal Despatches, 26 Nov. 1828, para. 5, Vol.108.

suffered any deterioration in the administration.<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck's attention to British relations with Nagpur was drawn by the Deputy Secretary to the Bengal Government, A. Sterling. In a note prepared in September 1829 he stated that British relations with this state could be modified considerably to the advantage of both the Raja and the British government. This, he said, could be done by making over the assigned districts to the Raja for an annual money payment. The Raja's army, hitherto officered by British officers and under British control, and for which these districts were held as assignments, should also be restored to the Raja's control. Peace in India and tranquillity in Nagpur had become well-established and it was unlikely that the services of the Raja's army would in fact be needed in future. Hence the change, Sterling said, could be safely effected to the mutual advantage of both the governments, one gaining a fixed annual sum for the British treasury, the other gaining in territory, "dignity, welfare and prosperity."<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Resident (F.B.S. Wilder) to Govt., 23 Aug. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828 No. 53.  
He was resident from 1828 to 1830.

(2) Sterling, Note, 15 Sept. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 27 Nov. 1829. No. 35.

Bentinck agreed entirely with Sterling in regard to a change in British relations with Nagpur. In a long minute dated 15 November 1829 he expressed himself strongly in favour of the proposed modification of the treaty of 1826. In seeking to effect the change, he said, he wished "to promote the interests and welfare, as well as to gratify the feelings, of the Rajah, and at the same time to secure a considerable pecuniary advantage to the Honourable Company." The arrangement made after the conquest of Nagpur in 1818 and modified by the treaty of 1826 he considered to have justified its purpose in establishing good government in Nagpur. But with British superintendents in charge of all the districts, British officers in command of the Raja's army and the Raja's authority so greatly circumscribed, could it be considered a permanent arrangement? Bentinck's answer was in the negative. For one reason, the government of Amherst had considered themselves bound to restore Nagpur to a position of independence.<sup>(1)</sup> The treaty also stipulated for the restoration of the

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(1) Govt. to Resident, 8 Sept. 1826, Enclos. to Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. Vol. 32;  
 Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 7 July 1826, Vol. 19.



assigned districts to the Raja in the event of his giving a good account of himself. For another, and in Bentinck's opinion, a more important reason, it ran counter to his policy of "relieving the native princes of India in alliance with the Honourable Company from every degree of control and interference in their internal administration."<sup>(1)</sup>

Holding such views Bentinck had reason to be dissatisfied with the arrangement at Nagpur which held the Raja in complete subordination to the British government. "The entire army of the state of Nagpur," he continued, in the minute, "is to all intents and purposes, a British force at the exclusive command and disposal of the Representative of the British government... Even in that portion of the country which has been given up to the Rajah he is not allowed to exercise independent authority." The treaty admitted British intervention "in the minutest details of his internal administration." It even bound him "to be guided by the resident in filling up appointments to his civil establishments and in regulating the expenditure of his Court and

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 15 Nov. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 27 Nov. 1829. No. 39.

household."<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck thus saw the Raja in a state of "thralldom" and was eager to see him as a "Sovereign Prince in the possession of his whole territory and the command of the armies of his government." Bentinck saw that the British officers in Nagpur would have to be withdrawn and would be affected adversely if the change was brought about.<sup>(2)</sup> But he would not shrink on that account. The Raja was to be left free to choose his own men as ministers and officers to run his own affairs.<sup>(3)</sup>

Thus resolved on effecting a change Bentinck was not slow in taking the initiative. Without the prior consent of the home government he pushed through the measure. In a demi-official despatch the resident at Nagpur was asked to give his opinion as to the probable reaction of the Raja to the change. It was intended, he was told, that the consent of the Raja

(1) *ibid.*

(2) Demi-official Letter to Resident, 30 Sept. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 27 Nov. 1829, No.36.

(3) Govt. to Resident, 27 Nov. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 27 Nov. 1829. No. 41, para. 6;  
Bentinck to Astell, 1 Nov. 1829, Bentinck Papers.

should be free and uninfluenced.<sup>(1)</sup> The resident sounded the Raja on the proposal and received his ready consent to the measure. The Raja had not expected the initiative to come from the side of the British government and he welcomed the change all the more on that account.<sup>(2)</sup> A new treaty was the result, cheerfully executed on both sides.<sup>(3)</sup>

By this treaty the Raja was given the administration of the reserved districts for an annual sum of 8 lacs of rupees to be paid to the British government. He received further the entire control of the state army from which British officers were to be withdrawn. The Raja was to hold inviolate all engagements of the British government with his tributary chiefs and zamindars.<sup>(4)</sup>

The power of unrestricted interference vested in the British government by the treaty of 1826 was

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(1) Demi-official Letter to Resident, 30 Sept. 1829, *ibid.* ..

(2) Resident to Govt., 25 Oct. 1829, *Beng. Pol. Cons.* 27 Nov. 1829. No. 37.

(3) Aitchison, Treaties, I, Treaty of 26 Dec. 1829, 434-436.

(4) *ibid.*

also modified. It was, however, stipulated as a precaution that the British government would be competent to offer advice to the Raja on all important matters of internal and external concern which he would be bound to accept. Further in the event of "gross and systematic oppression and anarchy and misrule" the British government could resume the management of the affected districts.<sup>(1)</sup>

Lest Bentinck's intentions be misunderstood the resident was asked to apprise the Raja distinctly that the right of offering advice was not intended to curb his freedom of judgement in matters relating to the selection of his ministers and officers and their conduct in the several departments of government. The power of assumption, the Raja was also to be told, was meant only for an extreme situation which it was confidently hoped would never arise.<sup>(2)</sup>

The treaty with the Raja was ratified and implemented but it was not approved by Ellenborough at the head of the India Board (1828-30). The relinquishment of control over the state army became

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) Govt. to Resident, 27 Nov. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 27 Nov. 1829. No. 41.

an object of special censure and was altogether disapproved. The British supremacy in India, it was stated, had been firmly established but for its maintenance it was imperative that military power in India should remain exclusively in British hands. Ellenborough who was viewing with great concern the increase of Russian influence in Central Asia considered this point particularly important. "To what purpose," he asked indignantly, "should the Rajah of Berar possess an army of his own? We cannot permit him to use it in a contest with a native power... It is against ourselves only that it can be available at some moment when a war upon a distant frontier, or any internal convulsion may distract our forces." And as Bentinck at this time was contemplating similar action in regard to the Hyderabad contingent he was distinctly instructed not to alter (except in an emergency) any existing arrangement without the prior consent of the home government.<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck's general policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states was also not appreciated. Freedom in internal affairs (conceived

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(1) Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830, Vol. 7.

largely in a military sense), it was held, could not fail to produce a desire for freedom in external affairs and was thus incompatible with the maintenance of "undisputed supremacy" in India.<sup>(1)</sup>

To the question whether British supremacy so asserted was an argument for exercising control in the internal affairs of the states in general in order to ensure good government, Ellenborough's despatch gave no positive answer. It held:

"Where our interference in the internal administration of a state is neither directly nor indirectly the result of our engagements nothing but the just and reasonable apprehension that its maladministration may endanger the general peace can justify our authoritative intervention in its affairs. The benefits which in a particular case might attend our intervention would be more than counter-balanced by the danger of violating a principle of national law."<sup>(2)</sup>

This could be said to be a reiteration of the old argument of non-intervention but the despatch as a whole gave an impression of a strong disapproval of the policy of the Indian government and was so understood by them.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) *ibid.* para. 30.

(3) Bentinck to Astell, 14 Nov. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

On receiving this despatch Bentinck made no official reply in justification of his action but privately he thought that he would rather resign than give up the "liberal" policy he was pursuing in relation to the Indian states.<sup>(1)</sup> By this time some of Bentinck's other administrative measures had been alike disliked in England and perhaps he did not feel inclined to carry the matter further.<sup>(2)</sup>

Metcalfe, however, fortified by his long experience in political matters was not quiescent and upheld Bentinck's policy in toto in a long minute recorded on the occasion. He defined Bentinck's policy in these words:

"We adhere faithfully to treaties. We respect the rights of other states. We protect all in alliance with us from interference in their internal affairs. And when as sometimes happens and as happened in the case of Bharatpur, interference becomes unavoidable, we hasten to restore the sovereignty of the lawful prince and recede from interference as soon as possible."<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Bentinck to [Anonymous] 9 Nov. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Ravenshaw to Bentinck, 1 Feb. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Metcalfe, minute, 20 Dec. 1830, Beng.Sec.Cons.  
31 Dec. 1830. No.1.

With this he found the views of Ellenborough to come into sharp conflict and sought a clear definition of the views of the home government on the policy to be followed in relation to the Indian states.<sup>(1)</sup>

Despite the censure of the home government the change effected by Bentinck was continued. It worked smoothly and Bentinck had reason to feel that his confidence had not been misplaced. The Raja continued to govern well in co-operation with the British government. The zamihdars were kept in check, the people protected and order maintained in the country. The Raja's government compared well with that of other states. Describing the effect of the change introduced in 1829 the resident in Nagpur, H.S. Graeme<sup>(2)</sup> wrote in 1834:

"The practical effect of the treaty of 1829 has been favourable. The Rajah has on all occasions evinced a ready attention to the wishes of the government and no intrigue has sprung up with a view of disturbing or weakening the alliance...The zamindars of Nagpur have retained indeed their obedience to the government of Nagpur... The police it is acknowledged has been conducted with a

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) H.S. Graeme was resident from 1831 to 1834.



vigilance and simplicity superior to that of the neighbouring countries and violent outrages in the Nagpur country were of a rarer occurrence than elsewhere." (1)

The Raja continued to govern his country till his death in 1853, when on account of the failure of a natural heir it was annexed to British territory. (2)

In Oudh Bentinck was faced with the task of reconciling the British obligation to protect the ruler from internal rebellion with the obligation to protect his subjects from the incidents of misgovernment. The one arose from the treaty stipulations of the British government with Oudh, the other from its paramount position in India. The policy of the British government towards this state wavered between intervention and non-intervention for a long time, and no improvement in the condition of government was

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(1) H.S. Graeme, Memorandum on Nagpur, 10 April 1834, Bentinck Papers.

(2) In later years the Raja's administration appears to have declined and many abuses in the government crept in.  
Mansel (commissioner of Nagpur) to Govt., 29 April 1854, P.P. 1856, XLV (82) p.7;  
Ramsay (Ex-resident) to Govt., 5 Feb. 1855, ibid. 46-52.

effected.<sup>(1)</sup> Lord Wellesley saw a solution for the problems of Oudh in its annexation to British territory and felt irritated when the Nawab evaded what he considered to be a voluntary offer to relinquish his authority in favour of the British government.<sup>(2)</sup>

The treaty which he forced on the Nawab in 1801 guaranteed him protection against foreign and domestic enemies and bound him to act always in conformity with British advice.<sup>(3)</sup> The course of policy adopted by Lord Minto and Lord Hastings in regard to Oudh was that of non-intervention.<sup>(4)</sup> The British government would advise and remonstrate but take no action even though the condition continued to be unsatisfactory.<sup>(5)</sup> A strong resident could however exercise great influence

- (1) N.B. Edmonstone, Note on Oudh, Bentinck Papers. It is not dated but refers to Bentinck's period. H.M. Lawrence, Essays on Indian Army and Oude, 280-343.
- (2) P.E. Roberts, India Under Wellesley, 123-124.
- (3) Aitchison, Treaties, I, Treaty of 10 Nov. 1801. Article VI, 126.
- (4) Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831 No.2.
- (5) Prinsep, "Note on the Policy of Interference and Non-interference for the consideration of the governor-general." 18 Dec. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

in the councils of the Oudh Government and even shape events in Oudh. The large sums of money obtained from the Nawab in the time of Lord Hastings and Lord Amherst against his real wishes indicate that the British government could in the last resort hope to see its views accepted by the Oudh government.<sup>(1)</sup> This would apply all the more when a weak ruler had to look to the resident for the protection of his authority against his <sup>discontented</sup> ~~discontented~~ subjects or his powerful minister. This was abundantly shown in 1827 when King Ghazi-ud-din Haider died at the age of fifty-three and was succeeded by his twenty-five year old son Mirza Nasir-ud-din Haider.

During the life-time of Ghazi-ud-din his powerful minister Moatamuddaula was found to be in open enmity with Mirza Nasir-ud-din. And so it was expected that on coming to the throne the king would hasten to disgrace the minister. But the minister in fact proved

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(1) Baillie, Note on Oudh loans, 20 June 1827, Bentinck Papers.  
 Baillie was resident at Lucknow from 1807 to 1815. In 1923 he was elected a Director of the East India Company, Dictionary of National Biography. See also J. Paton, The British Government and the Kingdom of Oudh, edited by B. Prasad. 80-90. J. Paton was assistant resident at Lucknow in Bentinck's time.  
 For early British influence in Oudh see Dr. C. C. Davies, Warren Hastings and Oudh.

to be too powerful for the new king and so instead of removing him from his office the king for a time decided to make a virtue of necessity. He was outwardly all praise for the minister and sought to placate him with extravagant gifts. The resident, M. Ricketts<sup>(1)</sup> was greatly surprised at the behaviour of the king and he did not like the continuance of the minister's ascendancy. Thinking that during the life-time of the king's father the minister's influence had contributed to "misrule, oppression, internal disorder and contempt of law and right," he took it upon himself to bring about the fall of the minister without authority from the government.<sup>(2)</sup>

He made use of the visit of the commander-in-chief, Lord Combermere to Lucknow, in December 1827, to ascertain the real wishes of the king with respect to the minister. At his suggestion, at a conference between the king and Combermere at which neither the

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(1) M. Ricketts was resident from 1823 to 1830 and was followed by Maddock (1830-31). Col. John Low was appointed resident in 1831 and held office till 1843.

(2) Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 22 Feb. 1828. Vol. 20.

resident nor the minister was present, the subject was broached by the commander-in-chief and the king unreservedly expressed his fear of the minister. He stated himself to be entirely in the grasp of the minister, told his guest that he was in fact oppressed by him and that if the minister came to know the hatred he (the king) bore him or the conversation that had taken place about him he would unscrupulously contrive to have him poisoned. The king wanted to be rid of the minister and said that he would be too grateful if when the minister accompanied Combermere out of the city he would take him away with him for good, or even better, if the minister were banished to England.<sup>(1)</sup>

This verbal expression of the king's wish to be rid of the minister was followed by a letter to the same effect. The king also appealed personally to the resident to release him from the minister's "thralldom".<sup>(2)</sup>

The resident welcomed the decision of the king and promised assistance if the personal safety of the

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(1) Resident to Govt. 18 Dec. 1827, Beng. Pol. Cons. 11 Jan. 1828. Nos. 25 and 26.

(2) Resident to Govt., 31 Dec. 1827, Beng. Pol. Cons. 18 Jan. 1828. No. 13. para. 2.

minister was not threatened and if the minister was placed under British protection after his dismissal. The king acceded to this proposal.<sup>(1)</sup>

The minister was accordingly invited to the residency and told of the king's decision to remove him from office. He was further informed on behalf of the British government that if he submitted quietly to the king's decision and did not create any disturbance in the country he would be allowed to depart from Oudh in peace under a British guarantee of protection. Being thus confronted by the resident the minister agreed to lay down his authority.<sup>(2)</sup>

The resident's action in taking upon himself the removal of the minister was severely criticised by the Bengal and home governments.<sup>(3)</sup> It served, however, to show the internal weakness of Oudh and its dependence on the British government to a delicate degree.

In other ways the British government exercised influence in the councils of Oudh government. One such way was to guarantee interest on loans from the Oudh government to the wives of Oudh rulers "their relations

(1) *ibid.* para. 3.

(2) *ibid.* para. 4.

(3) Govt. to Resident, 8 Feb. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Feb. 1828. No. 31; Bengal Despatches, 28 Jan. 1829. Vol.109.

and favourites, their families and establishments." The British resident held a weekly Darbar where amidst "the pomp of Eastern state the Vakeels of these Oude Princesses, the guaranteed nobles and other individuals assembled" to seek redress against the king's government. The issues were often petty but they produced bitter feeling between the two governments. The special position enjoyed by these people became for them a privileged possession, used on occasions to disregard the authority of the king's government.<sup>(1)</sup>

The British government was aware of the evil effects of this arrangement "the obvious tendency of which was to impair the legitimate rights of the native government of Oude and to involve the British authorities in endless disputes and vexatious interference regarding the domestic concerns and private interests of the individuals."<sup>(2)</sup> Metcalfe condemned the practice as setting aside the authority of the ruler and in effect establishing "a jurisdiction in counteraction of that of the ruler of the country, or at least separate from it,

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(1) Paton to Govt., 7 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 29 July 1831. No. 62;  
Paton, British Government, op. cit. 119-121.

(2) Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 22 Feb. 1828. para. 9.

a jurisdiction which is unwarrantable and mischievous and ought under any circumstances to be abolished."<sup>(1)</sup>

Another factor giving the British government influence in Oudh arose from the fact that about two thirds of the Bengal army derived its recruits from Oudh. These soldiers occupied a different position from the rest of the people of Oudh inasmuch as they preferred their complaints against the local authorities or their neighbours not direct to the government of Oudh but to the British government. They would send their petitions for redress to the resident formally signed by the officer commanding their company and countersigned by the officer in command of their regiment. The petition would come to the resident who in turn would send it to the government of Oudh for investigation and redress. These sepoys did not hesitate to abuse this privilege. It was often seen that in many cases the sepoy had "nothing personally at stake in the matter," that interested persons like "his uncle, cousin or some distant relations," had made the sepoy represent the case as his own. Many

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 17 Sept. 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 7.



zamindars also who by offering bribes or otherwise could make use of these sepoy's had their claims just or unjust settled in their favour. The evil had reached great dimensions and was a source of complaint by the government of Oudh. It weakened the authority of the government and gave an advantage to unscrupulous persons over genuine sufferers.<sup>(1)</sup>

The British government thus came to be closely associated with the Oudh government in several ways. N.B. Edmonstone described the connection that had subsisted between the two governments for more than half a century as more close and intimate than any other existing in India, "domestic connection, if it may be so called."<sup>(2)</sup> Prinsep considered the British government as having effective control over the policies and measures of Oudh government.<sup>(3)</sup> The inhabitants of Oudh also according to the assistant resident in Bentinck's time

(1) Paton, British Government, 114-117;  
H.M. Lawrence, Essays on Indian Army and Oude, 328.

(2) N.B. Edmonstone, Note on Oudh, op. cit.

(3) Prinsep, Note, op. cit.

were "impressed with the belief that the Oude Government exists merely at the pleasure of the British power..."<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus while the British influence in Oudh was considerable the internal condition of the country remained deplorable. At the root of misgovernment in Oudh was the Amildari system of farming out the revenues of the country to the highest bidders - the Amildars. These officers controlled the revenue, judicial and police administration of their territories under their charge. They had often secured their offices after bribing the minister or other favourites at the court and felt little compunction or remorse in exacting as much as they could during their uncertain term of office.<sup>(2)</sup> No check was maintained over them. They had "a complete carte blanche, as to the amount of money they might take from the cultivators."<sup>(3)</sup> Even the Intelligence Department of the government became a convenient instrument in their hands. The function of reporting transactions in the country was assigned

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(1) Paton, British Government, 139.

(2) Ricketts to Bentinck, 7 Sept. 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons. 14 Oct. 1829. No.86.

(3) Resident to Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No.42. para. 14.

to a few individuals who purchased their offices by paying large sums as bribes and in turn assigned the function to their deputies for particular districts. These persons were often in collusion with the Amils or were themselves their agents with the result that the misdeeds of public officers had little chance of reaching the ears of the king.<sup>(1)</sup>

As Bentinck looked upon British relations with Oudh he saw that the immense influence possessed by the British government there was no guarantee for good government.<sup>(2)</sup> If the king was left free to manage his own affairs he thought a situation might develop that would be agreeable to the authority of the ruler and at the same time promote the interests of his people. Such a course had the danger of making conditions worse if it did not prove a success but Bentinck was ready to run the risk. His fondest hope was to witness benevolent reforms worked out by the ruler himself. As he himself wrote to the resident:

"No obligation of the Supreme Government is in my judgement more imperative than that of reforming the administration of Oude and I am determined, if possible to effect it. It is

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(1) Ricketts to Govt., 7 Sept. 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons. 14 Oct. 1829. No.86.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 30 Sept. 1831, Beng.Pol.Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2.

most desirable that this should be done by the royal authority exclusively. Direct interference which is in fact nothing more or less than the transfer of the government from the king to the resident is as far as my observation goes, the very worst course to be permitted."<sup>(1)</sup>

If successful Bentinck's experiment would open a new chapter in British relations with Oudh and would be a triumph of his policy of non-intervention. It would also resolve the dilemma confronted by him of reconciling the British obligation towards the king's subjects with "a due respect for the Sovereign Rights of the King of Oude."<sup>(2)</sup>

Accordingly a course of non-intervention was acted upon. The choice of the minister was left entirely to the king. The resident was asked to abstain from interference in the internal administration of the country. In 1829 the officiating resident opposed the appointment of Ram Dayal as minister but was told that it was the intention of the government to hold the ruler entirely responsible for the choice of the minister and

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(1) Bentinck to Maddock, 4 Aug. 1830, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Govt. to Resident, 28 May 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 28 May 1830. No. 41.

the government of his country.<sup>(1)</sup> A few months later the resident's conduct was thus prescribed:

"Your first endeavour ought to be to obtain the confidence of the Court to which you are accredited and when it shall appear clearly to be neither the intention of the British government, nor the personal ambition of its representative to assume an authority inconsistent with the dignity or offensive to the feelings of the Sovereign, or the minister, the Court will then probably be anxious to court your advice as heretofore it had been unwilling to submit to the resident's dictation."<sup>(2)</sup>

In 1830 after some short-lived ministries Hakim Mahdi was appointed minister by the king. The resident sought to insist on the prior consent of the British government to this appointment but was not supported by Bentinck who had resolved on the uncontrolled choice of the minister by the king.<sup>(3)</sup> In this case further Hakim Mahdi appeared to him to be an able minister and so his appointment was allowed to stand and the resident was asked not to interfere <sup>in</sup> with the internal administration

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(1) Bentinck to Maddock, 20 Oct. 1830, Bentinck Papers; Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 9 Oct. 1830. No. 16. Vol.26.

(2) Govt. to Resident, 25 Aug. 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 19. para. 8.

(3) Resident to Govt., 10 May 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 28 May 1830. No. 40; Govt. to Resident, 28 May 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 28 May 1830. No. 41.

of the country.<sup>(1)</sup> Shortly afterwards Bentinck paid a visit to the king at Lucknow and warned him solemnly that the freedom given to him to run his affairs was also the right to improve them and not to abuse that power, and that if he did not take advantage of it to introduce a better system of government the British government would not hesitate to assume the government of the country. The case of Arcot and others were cited as a warning for him. Bentinck also told him of his intention of recommending to the home authorities the taking over of the Oudh administration if this warning went unheeded. This reference was made.<sup>(2)</sup>

Hakim Mahdi began the important task of reconstruction. His way was beset with difficulties.

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(1) Bentinck to Maddock (resident,) 2 Oct. 1830. Bentinck Papers;  
 Bentinck to Astell, 5 July 1830, Bentinck Papers;  
 Bentinck to Metcalfe, 15 Dec. 1830, Bentinck Papers;  
 Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 9 Oct. 1830. No. 16. Vol. 26.

(2) Note of a conference between Bentinck and the King of Oudh on 21 Jan. 1831. Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 4;  
 Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2;  
 Gov. Gen's Sec. (Prinsep) to Bengal Govt., 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 1;  
 Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 16. Vol. 27.

He had to deal with a weak-minded and capricious monarch who was led by others in important matters affecting the government of the country.<sup>(1)</sup> He had also to curb powerful interests that throve on misgovernment. And he devoted himself diligently to the task of reform. Though venal he was gifted with remarkable powers of management which soon began to be felt in every department of government. In several districts the Amani system<sup>(2)</sup> was substituted for that of revenue farming, and tribunals for enquiring into complaints against the Amils were set up. Guilty officers were severely dealt with. Thanadars found guilty of taking bribes were flogged and publicly disgraced by being turned out of their districts with "their faces blackened

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(1) His deficient education afforded him an easy occupation in trivial pursuits. He spent almost "the whole of his time in indolence and inactivity or in effeminate amusements scarcely ever attending to public business..."

Resident to Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 42. paras. 3-4.

Henry Lawrence called his whole reign as "one continued satire upon the subsidiary and protected system."

H. Lawrence, Essays on Indian Army and Oude, 329.

(2) Under this system an Amildar was not personally responsible for a fixed amount of revenue. He "in fact is a government officer on a fixed salary and is only like our own collectors liable to removal from office if any failure in the revenue be attributable to his negligence..."

Resident to Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 42. para. 15.

and mounted backwards on asses." The refractory zamindars were alike put down with a strong hand and comparative tranquillity prevailed in Oudh. The task of reducing the Oudh army was taken in hand and between 11 October 1831 and 13 June 1832 some 14,000 troops were discharged and an economy of nearly ten lakhs of rupees per annum was effected.<sup>(1)</sup>

The measures of the minister, however, aroused enemies who worked for his removal. Perceiving the weak character of the king, instead of consolidating his position in the royal affections he began to look to the British government for support.<sup>(2)</sup> He could not forget how Moatamuddaula had been earlier removed by British intervention and how vital the British support was for the continuance of his authority. "The people of Lucknow were for many years in the habit of thinking that no minister could last for any considerable time unless he had been nominated jointly

(1) Resident to Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 6 Aug.1832. No.42.

(2) Asst. Resident (Paton) to Govt., 14 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Aug. 1831. No.5;  
Paton to Govt., 18 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 12 Aug. 1831. No. 71.



by the British government and the king..."<sup>(1)</sup> And the minister expected more and more that his measures would be publicly upheld by the British government. The king sensed danger in the minister's independence, which showed itself in a lack of respect towards the members of the royal house, whose allowances the minister in his zeal for reform had not hesitated to clip. The king's mind was constantly worked upon by self-interested persons who depicted the minister as getting out of his control and urged him to exercise his authority directly.<sup>(2)</sup>

The favourable view taken by the British government of the measures of reform pursued by the minister also caused apprehension in the mind of the king. Lucknow was full of ill-conceived rumours that the reforms of the minister were motivated by the design of facilitating the transfer of the country to the British government. Lucknow "politicians" believed that the minister was

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(1) Resident to Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. para. 10.

(2) Resident to Govt., 6 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept. 1832. No. 83. para. 25;  
Resident to Govt., 10 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept. 1832. No. 88. para. 10.

preparing to make over the country to the British government, that he had reduced troops to render the transfer more convenient, and that the king had discovered a copy of a letter from the minister to one of the members of Council in Calcutta, proposing to deliver over the Oude country to us in a few months..."<sup>(1)</sup> Bentinck, who had decided to hold the king responsible for the internal administration of the country, did not come to the minister's support. He approved of the resident's conduct in not committing British support to him.<sup>(2)</sup>

Left to himself the minister could not maintain himself long in power. He was dismissed unceremoniously by the king in August 1832 and replaced by a mediocrity, Roshan-ud-daula.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Resident Low's Private Letter to Bentinck, 7 Sept. 1832, Home Misc. Series. Vol.738. p.337.

(2) Govt. to Resident, 20 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept. 1832. No. 91.

(3) Resident to Govt., 6 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept. 1832. No. 83;  
Resident to Govt., 8 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 17 Sept. 1832. No. 84;  
Resident to Govt., 18 Oct. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 12 Nov. 1832. No. 28.

Bentinck was soon receiving reports of misgovernment in Oudh after the removal of Hakim Mahdi. Crime was on the increase and the zamindars rebellious.<sup>(1)</sup> Bentinck hesitated to take action. He had in 1831 sought the permission of the home government for a temporary assumption of the administration in the event of continued misgovernment and he waited for instructions before taking any independent action.<sup>(2)</sup> The Directors' assent to the proposed assumption was contained in their despatch of 16 July 1834 which was received in India about the end of 1834 when Bentinck was preparing to leave the country. This despatch, while giving the desired authority to the Supreme Government, left the actual assumption to Bentinck's discretion.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Resident to Govt., 6 Oct. 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
5 Nov. 1832. No. 31;  
Resident to Govt., 16 Oct. 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
26 Nov. 1832. No. 34.

(2) Bentinck to Auber, 21 Oct. 1832, Bentinck Papers;  
Bentinck to Ravenshaw, 11 Dec. 1832, Bentinck Papers.

(3) India and Bengal Despatches, 16 July 1834,  
No. 11. Vol. 2.

On receipt of these orders the matter was considered by Bentinck in Council. The resident was summoned to Calcutta to report in person. It was found that while the state of affairs in the country was still unsatisfactory there had been no gross maladministration for a year and a half past.<sup>(1)</sup>

Though fully empowered to do so, Bentinck was not inclined to take strong action. He satisfied himself with another warning to the king, even when admitting the hopelessness of any real improvement at his hands.<sup>(2)</sup> The king was also apprised of the tenor of the instructions received from the home government to give weight to the warning conveyed to him.<sup>(3)</sup>

Further than that Bentinck did not go. There were several reasons for this inaction. He was on the eve of his departure and so reluctant to adopt an extreme measure. His health had broken down and the energy

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(1) Resident, Memorandum on Oudh, 12 Dec. 1834.  
Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Feb. 1835. No.65.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 3 Feb. 1835, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
5 Feb. 1835. No. 68.

(3) Bentinck to king, 5 Feb. 1835, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
5 Feb. 1835. No.69.

for a strong policy of taking over the administration by force if persuasion failed was lacking. The dilemma of reconciling the internal sovereignty of the ruler of Oudh with the obligation towards his subjects was unresolved. The treaty with Oudh did not authorise assumption, and hence a resort to it would have been an infringement of that engagement.<sup>(1)</sup> Bentinck had by this time already come to doubt the legality of his action in Mysore and had recommended to the Directors a modification of his interference there.<sup>(2)</sup> He feared also that taking over the administration of Oudh would be "odious in the opinion of all India".<sup>(3)</sup> In Oudh itself the rumours of assumption had upset the king and his minister and higher powers were being invoked to ward off the apprehended danger. "All the pious God-seeking persons," read a contemporary paper, "attached to the Court have been directed to intercede with Heaven and to invoke its aid in diverting so great

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(1) Paton, British Government, 148-149.

(2) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 14 April 1834.

(3) Bentinck, minute, 3 Feb. 1835, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Feb. 1835. No. 68.

an evil from all true believers. The astrologers have also been in great requisition and all the orthodox modes of pumping the stars resorted to..."<sup>(1)</sup> For all these reasons Bentinck felt inclined "to forbear" and allow the king "full benefit of the most favourable construction of the Court's orders."<sup>(2)</sup>

When considering the question of assumption Bentinck for a time seemed to have in mind an alternative. It was the appointment of a minister chosen and supported by the British government, a mode of intervention to which he was otherwise opposed.<sup>(3)</sup> But this idea did not mature into action, and the resident was asked to report to the government the effect of the warning given to the king to enable it to determine the future course of action.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Quoted in The Englishman, 6 Jan. 1835 from Mofussil Akhbar.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 3 Feb. 1835, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Feb. 1835. No. 68.

(3) Low to Bentinck, 9 Jan [1835?] Bentinck Papers.

(4) Govt. to Resident, 5 Feb. 1835, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Feb. 1835. No. 70;  
India Pol. Letters Recd. 19 Feb. 1835 No. 6. Vol. I.

Bentinck's abstention from intervention had Metcalfe's consent.<sup>(1)</sup>

The case of Oudh showed that for an able minister to play a useful role he had to command the full support of either the king or the British government. If the former was the case the principle of non-intervention could work advantageously and Bentinck's policy would run a smooth course. But if the latter was resorted to the principle of non-intervention would be infringed, there would be occasion for a misunderstanding of British intentions and the disadvantages of dual authority would have to be faced. To this Bentinck preferred a direct substitution of British authority. He envisaged British intervention only in an extreme situation. To decide when that situation actually arose involved a real difficulty as Bentinck was avowedly seeking reform at the hands of the Indian princes.

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(1) Bentinck to Metcalfe, not dated, Sunday, Calcutta, Bentinck Papers.  
He wrote to Metcalfe who in 1834 had taken charge of the governorship of the new province of Agra (constituted under the Charter Act of 1833): "We have in our last council finally decided upon not assuming the administration of Oude which is in conformity with your opinion." *ibid.*

In Hyderabad Bentinck's policy was one of drift and led to no happy results. It started with high intentions and ended in a sad admission of failure. The very thing he was averse to, the employment of Europeans in the Indian states, as curbing the authority of the ruler and lessening the chances for the employment of Indians, appeared in the end to be the only remedy. And yet he would not have recourse to it and looked to the home government for instructions.

The British relations with this state were regulated by the treaty of 12 October 1800. By it the subsidiary force (stipulated by the treaty of 1 September 1798) was increased. In communication<sup>tation</sup> of a money payment for this force the Nizam ceded in perpetuity all the territory he had acquired in 1792 and 1799 (in wars against Mysore). In the event of any war with any other power the Nizam agreed to furnish six thousand infantry and nine thousand cavalry from his own forces.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Nizam further engaged by this treaty not to correspond with any other power directly and to submit his differences with other states to the decision of

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(1) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Treaty of 12 Oct. 1800, Articles 5 and 12, pp.69, 71.



the British government. Internally the Nizam was to be "absolute" the British government having no concern with any of his "children, relations, subjects, or servants."<sup>(1)</sup> The treaty also provided for the employment of the subsidiary force for internal purposes (viz. in cases of disturbance, rebellion or unjust withholding of revenue) after "the reality of the offence" had been ascertained by the British government.<sup>(2)</sup>

Though the treaty provided for full internal freedom the inequality of the alliance soon came to impinge upon the status of the state. Circumstances further facilitated it. "The downfall of Tippoo," Metcalfe said, "made a great difference in our relations with this Court. After that event the alliance ceased to have any feature of equality. Our protection was still necessary to the Nizam against the Mahrattas, but subordination to his protector was the price to be paid."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) *ibid.* Article 15, 72.

(2) *ibid.* Article 17, 72.

(3) Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 Aug. 1829. No. 61B.

From this time onwards the British government controlled the choice of minister. It appeared as "the next important step towards the completion of the Nizams dependence" (the first being the stationing of a subsidiary force in the state). Supported by the British government the minister in course of time usurped his master's authority and the Nizam began to fade into obscurity. The ministers Arastu Jah and after him Mir Alam both had British support. After the death of Mir Alam in 1808 an "extraordinary" arrangement took place. The Nizam nominated Munir-ul-mulk as his minister but under British influence it was agreed that he was to exercise no actual authority. All power was left in the hands of a deputy, Chandu Lal, who was then in British favour.

"So that from that time in addition to its Sovereign Prince, excluded from all concern in the management of his affairs, in consequence of our interference, the state of Hyderabad has had a prime minister in the same predicament..."<sup>(1)</sup>

The administration of Chandu Lal from this time onward was baneful in its consequences. The Nizam, partly because of his own weakness and partly

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(1) *ibid.*;  
Henry Russell, Remarks, P.P. 1831-32, XIV, 165.  
He was resident at Hyderabad from 1811 to 1820.

because of the British support commanded by Chandu Lal, was powerless to control the minister and the British government was not inclined to do so.<sup>(1)</sup> Chandu Lal consequently had power without responsibility with all its results. He made a reckless use of public money to increase his influence in the state. Friends and foes alike were befriended by money. To maintain his hold intact he considered it important to ingratiate himself with the resident and knew how to do it.

"Besides his subservience to the British Resident in all public measures, there was money in the shape of pension, salary, or donation, for any one whom the Resident recommended. Any gentleman supposed to have influence, directly or indirectly, with the British Government, could command a share of the revenues of the Nizam's country. This was the origin of his lavish waste of public money on Sir William Rumbold and Mr. W. Palmer and their connexions."<sup>(2)</sup>

The indiscriminate use of public resources involved financial embarrassment. Extortion and borrowing on a large scale followed. Large portions of the country were farmed out to self-seeking adventurers and by them sub-let to others. These farmers used their power

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(1) Henry Russell, Remarks, *ibid.* 165.

(2) Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, *Beng. Pol. cons. ibid.*

unscrupulously to hoard money and the cultivators suffered grievously. There was no appeal against the tyranny of farmers and they were unchecked in their rapaciousness. They even had the power of life and death in their hands.<sup>(1)</sup>

The administration failed in the task of maintaining order and many villages were depopulated "Almost all government," stated a witness, "had ceased, the country was in the possession of organized bands of plunderers, the roads were only to be travelled under the protection of armed bodies of men, and life and property were every where insecure."<sup>(2)</sup>

British intervention became unavoidable. Under Metcalfe as resident (1820-25) English officers were appointed to superintend the revenue and police administration in several districts. To check extortion village settlements with the heads of village communities were effected under British guarantee. The British officers received complaints of any breach of engagements by the Nizam's officers and reported them to the resident. The system worked.

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(1) J. Sutherland, Sketches, 55.

(2) *ibid.* 56.

There were mistakes and difficulties but on the whole the plan was a success. The assessment was later seen to be high. This arose from the error of "taking too much into consideration the means of the people to extend cultivation, and of fixing an yearly increase on the village accordingly." There was also the underhand opposition of the minister who saw his authority greatly curtailed as a result of these settlements and who, while outwardly acquiescing, secretly worked for the subversion of the plan. But notwithstanding these handicaps the plan on the whole bore fruit. Comparative tranquillity prevailed in Hyderabad during these years, agriculture was extended and the people had greater security and justice than before. (1)

Metcalfe was followed by Martin (1825-1830) and under him the village settlements were continued. On 13 September 1828 Martin submitted a long report on the subject of the revenue administration in Hyderabad since the period of British intervention. In the last four years of the quinquennial settlement he reported a deficit of about 60 lakhs of rupees and

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(1) Resident (Martin) to Govt., 13 Sept. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 Aug. 1829. No. 61A; Sutherland, Sketches, 57.

gave it as his opinion that though much had been done to promote agricultural prosperity and to increase security of life and prosperity under British officers, British intervention could not be considered financially successful or to have afforded complete protection to the people against oppression.<sup>(1)</sup>

This report of Martin was not recorded till 14 August 1829 and with it was recorded a minute by Metcalfe dated 13 May 1829 in which he outlined British relations with Hyderabad and replied to some of Martin's charges against his administration of Hyderabad affairs. The British government, he said, had originally intervened to control the nomination of ministers in Hyderabad and hence it was bound to check their extravagance. Chandu Lal was a creature of British creation. His "vicious conduct and incorrigible propensity to extortion were the real causes of our interference." Under Martin the minister had not been properly controlled. Indeed, he pointed out, Martin had entertained a high opinion of the ability and public-spiritedness of Chandu Lal. The

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(1) Resident to Govt., 13 Sept. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 Aug. 1829. No. 61A.

result had been that with the relaxation of British supervision under Martin British control had not been effective.<sup>(1)</sup>

Metcalfe also drew attention to another result of British intervention that was still growing. Portions of the Nizam's forces, disciplined and commanded by British officers, were absorbing a large portion of the state revenues.<sup>(2)</sup> Above forty lakhs rupees per annum of the Nizam's revenues were being spent to maintain a force which was "commanded entirely by British officers and was under the exclusive orders and control of the British resident." The auxiliary force, he said, had in fact become "a sort of plaything" for the resident and "an extensive source of patronage at the Nizam's expense." This, he said, was rendered possible by the complete subservience of the minister

(1) Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 Aug. 1829. No. 61B.

(2) By the treaty of 1 Sept. 1798 the Nizam was bound to furnish six thousand infantry and nine thousand cavalry in the event of war. But as the Nizam's forces were seen to be inefficient British superintendence of the Nizam's military establishment was started. An account of the origin and history of these forces under British control may be read in Calcutta Review, 1849, XI, 141-219.

to the British government. The number of British officers in the Nizam's service was increasing. The "temptation" could not be resisted. As against 83 British officers in the Nizam's service maintained at a cost of 9,16,260 rupees in 1825 the number had increased to 123 in 1828 at a cost of 13,49,880 rupees.<sup>(1)</sup>

Metcalf suggested that at a future date British interference, both civil and military, might be withdrawn when some opportunity, like the accession of a new sovereign, occurred. Withdrawal of military control from the state Metcalfe considered a serious thing in an empire where military power was everything. The existence of an efficient force paid by the Nizam, commanded by British officers and under full British control was a great political advantage. It was an accession of military power costing nothing to the British government. But, in spite of this consideration on the whole Metcalfe favoured complete British withdrawal from Hyderabad. The restoration of the Nizam's independence he deemed to be an object worthy of British consideration and accomplishment when the time came.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 Aug. 1829. No. 61B.

(2) *ibid.*



This was the background against which Bentinck decided on a major change in British relations with Hyderabad. Metcalfe's views on the subject of non-intervention approached his own. Like Metcalfe also he thought that the Nizam had had no freedom in the past and that the British government had exercised real power there. And he looked forward to see the Nizam managing his own affairs. The opportunity came in 1829 with the accession of a new ruler. In May 1829 the Nizam died and was succeeded by his eldest son Nasir-ud-Daula.<sup>(1)</sup> In July 1829 when the resident went to the new Nizam to deliver Bentinck's letter of congratulation the Nizam expressed a wish that British interference be withdrawn and he left to manage his own affairs.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) The accession of the new sovereign was also made use of by Bentinck for a change in the style of correspondence between the Nizam and the British government. Hitherto the Nizam spoke of himself as "our royal self" and the position of the Governor-General appeared to be inferior. This was corrected and henceforward the heads of the two governments corresponded on an equal footing. Govt. to Resident, 30 May 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 June 1829. No. 91; Resident to Govt., 7 Oct. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Oct. 1829. No. 58.

(2) Resident to Govt., 21 July 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 21 Aug. 1829. No. 55.

Bentinck was all admiration for the Nizam's wish to be relieved of British control. It seemed to him to be both "natural and reasonable." The Nizam he considered to have been held hitherto in the background by his minister under British control. British intervention in Hyderabad had been necessitated under peculiar circumstances in which the minister Chandu Lal, enjoying British support, went astray. The British government therefore interfered to check his oppressive conduct. Now that the Nizam had expressed his willingness to govern his affairs himself Bentinck welcomed the opportunity of placing British relations with Hyderabad on a footing more consistent with "the dignity and independence" of the Nizam. The resident was accordingly instructed to leave to the Nizam the uncontrolled choice of his minister and other officers. In order to enable the Nizam to discharge all the duties devolving on him as "a Sovereign Prince" the resident was asked not to interfere in his internal affairs from this time onward. An exception was however made in the case of revenue settlements that had been formed under British guarantee, till the period of their expiry when even that control was to

be withdrawn. (1)

Bentinck wrote a letter to the Nizam expressing his great satisfaction in complying with the Nizam's wish to manage his affairs, "a desire worthy of a great prince." With the exception of revenue agreements, the Nizam was told, in every other respect he would be "absolute". At the same time his attention to the welfare of his subjects was emphasized by the quotation of a Persian verse:

"By all means do not wound the hearts of your people,  
If you do you will dig up your own root,  
Govt is a sin (or misplaced) in the hands of those,  
From whose hands (i.e. from whose acts) hands are  
raised (in distress) to God..."

And with this Bentinck fervently hoped that under his rule the prosperity and happiness of the people would increase. (2)

Having thus resolved on the internal freedom of the Nizam Bentinck first withdrew British intervention from the Nizam's civil affairs. British superintendents were told that they were being retained temporarily in

(1) Govt. to Resident, 21 Aug. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons.  
21 Aug. 1829. No. 58.

(2) Bentinck to Nizam, not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons.  
21 Aug. 1829. No. 57.

the Nizam's civil administration to maintain the revenue engagements guaranteed by the British government. Bentinck would have preferred the British officers to be withdrawn at once from their civil functions under a pledge by the Nizam's government that the revenue engagements would be faithfully observed, but it was then thought that this might not be a sufficient guarantee against their violation. Hence their temporary continuation was decided on. The resident was however asked to apprise the Nizam clearly that they would be precluded from any interference in the civil administration and that their duty would be confined to receiving complaints of the infraction of the revenue engagements. These complaints, if well-grounded, would be forwarded by them to the resident, who in his turn would send them to the Nizam's government for consideration and necessary orders. The Nizam was further to understand that if some time later it appeared that the employment of these officers was no longer necessary then they would be withdrawn even before the expiry of the revenue engagements.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Govt. to Resident, 30 Oct. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Oct. 1829. No. 60;  
Resident to Govt., 15 Oct. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 7 Nov. 1829. Nos. 59-60.

In accordance with this decision British control from the Nizam's civil affairs was withdrawn. Bentinck at this time (1829) even appears to have intended withdrawing control from military affairs which was maintained at a large expenditure of public money. In May 1829 Astell sent Bentinck a copy of an anonymous letter he had received from India containing a list of civil and military officers in the Nizam's service with their salaries. Astell's own comment was that "a system so onerous to the Nizam, so open to abuse...and so discreditable to our character cannot too soon undergo revision."<sup>(1)</sup> Bentinck found himself in entire agreement with Astell and "promised" him that "whether the contingent be kept up or not, the cost shall be much diminished and the corps shall be made to assume, its natural native character."<sup>(2)</sup>

New rules were accordingly drawn up for regulating the number, pay and allowances of British officers in the Nizam's civil and military services. The duties of some

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(1) Astell to Bentinck, 5 May 1829, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Bentinck to Astell, 1 Nov. 1829, Bentinck Papers.

officers were combined while some posts were altogether abolished. The posts of Principal Commissary of Stores, Superintending Surgeon, Judge Advocate, Medical Store-keeper and Surgeon to the Darbar were abolished. Emphasis was laid on retrenchment in the Nizam's administration. At the same time the appointment and promotion of officers in the Nizam's service was taken away from the hands of the resident.<sup>(1)</sup>

Though these changes were effected Bentinck's intention of doing away with the military control of the Nizam's affairs as he had done in Nagpur was not encouraged by the home government. The secret despatch of 9 June 1830, of which Ellenborough was the author, censured Bentinck's relinquishment of military control in Nagpur and forbade similar action in respect of Hyderabad in definite terms.<sup>(2)</sup> After its receipt Bentinck did not pursue the matter further.

The retention of military control however presented

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(1) Govt. to Resident, 19 Dec. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 Dec. 1829. No. 55;  
Govt. to Resident, 8 Jan. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Jan. 1830 No. 83;  
Govt. to Resident, 5 Feb. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Feb. 1830. No. 41.

(2) Board's Secret Drafts, 9 June 1830. Vol. 7.

difficulties and to an extent jeopardised the success of Bentinck's experiment. The Hyderabad contingent was the only efficient force in the state and its control by the resident made the Nizam and his minister look to him for the vindication of their government's authority against discontented and rebellious subjects. Public confidence in the effectiveness and permanence of the Nizam's authority could not develop. The officiating resident E.B. Ravenshaw in November 1830 testified to the existence of a general belief in Hyderabad that the withdrawal of British interference was not lasting.

"An impression also appears to be very generally entertained among the natives, that the lion will not permanently withdraw his foot from the spot where he has once imprinted its mark, and that the temporary abandonment of our interference is but the prelude to a more complete and durable possession."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was thus seen that the Nizam's authority was never effectively established and from the beginning the success of non-intervention hung by a delicate thread. As early as October 1829 the resident was reporting to the government the difficulty he found himself in on

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(1) Ravenshaw to Govt., 3 Nov. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 Nov. 1830. No. 25.

account of the new system which had transferred civil control to the Nizam while military control was still vested in the British government. A Kiladar in the south-west had risen in rebellion against the Nizam's government and the resident had been asked for the assistance of the contingent in putting down the rebellion. If the authority of the Nizam was to be treated as real the aid of the contingent, which was technically the Nizam's force, could not be denied. If the aid was given it involved the British government in disputes between the Nizam and his subjects, and if it was denied the refusal cut across Nizam's internal freedom. The resident in this dilemma sought the instructions of the government.<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck, who was at this time considering the possibility of withdrawing British control from the Nizam's military affairs, decided as a temporary measure that when a requisition for the employment of the contingent was made by the Nizam the resident should first satisfy himself that the object for which these forces were being employed was just and necessary.<sup>(2)</sup> The incident was a

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(1) Resident to Govt., 12 Oct. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Oct. 1829. No. 62.

(2) Govt. to Resident, 30 Oct. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Oct. 1829. No. 64.



small one but it served to show how civil and military control could not be easily separated.

Meanwhile, these forces were more and more in demand, and in 1832 Bentinck was finding himself in an embarrassing position. The resident had reported a case of the apprehension of two rebellious zamindars at the requisition of the Nizam's government. After they had been arrested it became known that they had been driven into rebellion by the oppressive conduct of the Nizam's government. Thus it was felt by the resident that the British government ran the risk of becoming involved in the punishment of the Nizam's subjects even when they were really not to blame. As the resident found "a general spirit of insubordination and violence" in the country he feared that such instances might increase and he sought specific instructions from the government for the regulation of his conduct.<sup>(1)</sup>

The resident's report put Bentinck in a difficult situation. The accounts received from Hyderabad so far had shown that the effects of non-intervention in civil affairs had not been favourable and he had come to regard

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(1) Resident to Govt., 11 June 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Aug. 1832. No. 2.

the cause of reform in Hyderabad as disappointing. It appeared "hopeless to expect that the Hyderabad government will establish such a system as to leave its subjects no excuse for resistance to the authority of its officers..." And he now felt perplexed. After the definite orders of the home government to the contrary the withdrawal of military control from Hyderabad was out of the question. And if military control was maintained it appeared to point to the control of civil affairs also. To do so would be to abandon the principle of non-intervention, to admit failure and to revert to civil intervention which had been relinquished. Being thus confronted Bentinck thought fit to submit the whole question to the decision of the home government.<sup>(1)</sup>

Metcalfe to whom the case had been referred for opinion found the embarrassment in Hyderabad easy to understand. It arose in a great measure, he said, from the continuance of military control while civil interference had been withdrawn. It was scarcely possible, he said, "to maintain a military interference which leads to our taking part against the people in

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(1) Gov. Gen's Sec. to Bengal Government, 19 July 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Aug. 1832. No.1;  
Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 22 Aug. 1833 paras. 226-227.

the event of rebellion, and at the same time to abstain altogether from civil interference..." He had earlier expressed himself in favour of removing British control both from civil and military affairs. But as the military control had been retained he now suggested that the authority to use the Nizam's forces under British control for putting down outbreaks should be given to the resident along with the power of listening to the complaints of the people in arms and settling the dispute in concert with the Nizam's government.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Directors in their despatch of 8 September 1835 upheld the earlier views of Bentinck (page 135 ) that these forces should be employed only after the resident was satisfied that they were being used for a good purpose.<sup>(2)</sup>

If the retention of military control in Hyderabad created difficulties, Bentinck's withdrawal of civil interference brought him increasing disappointment. Soon after the withdrawal of British control Bentinck was receiving unfavourable reports of the state of affairs in Hyderabad. In November 1830 the officiating resident,

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 9 Aug. 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 13 Aug. 1832. No. 12.

(2) India and Bengal Despatches, 8 Sept. 1835. No. 39. paras. 14-16. Vol. 6.

describing the effects of British withdrawal, stated that from several villages complaints of the infringement of revenue engagements had been received. Robberies and murders were increasing and zamindars becoming more and more unruly, at one time fighting among themselves, at another withholding the payment of public revenue. It was further stated that troops were being used frequently for maintaining order.<sup>(1)</sup>

Time passed and matters wore no better an aspect. In December 1831 the resident, J. Stewart,<sup>(2)</sup> submitted reports from several superintendents in charge of revenue engagements showing the unsatisfactory state of the country. To remedy affairs he recommended that the system of non-intervention should be modified and the superintendents entrusted with police powers in their respective areas. This plan, he said, had the merit of being effective without being expensive. The period of the expiration of the revenue engagements was approaching and the superintendents, who were discharging restricted functions at the time, could easily undertake this duty

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(1) Officiating Resident (Ravenshaw) to Govt., 3 Nov. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 Nov. 1830. No.25.

(2) J. Stewart was resident from 1830 to 1838.

without any increased expenditure. He thought that this plan was calculated to secure the lives and property of the people and would be acceptable to the Nizam's government.<sup>(1)</sup>

The position was reviewed by Bentinck in a minute dated 24 February 1832. He considered the state of affairs in Hyderabad serious enough to require the attention of the British government. But he seemed to vacillate in thinking of any definite action. To intervere or not to interfere was the question and he saw no clear way. The resident had recommended partial interference, the control of the police by the superintendents. But this to Bentinck appeared as lending support to the Nizam's government and becoming identified with it in its oppressive acts. He feared also that the British officers so employed would become involved in the whole of civil administration (in enforcing revenue collections and in apprehending offenders) and thus the whole edifice of non-intervention would topple down. The resident's plan in its conception was a partial measure and hence in his opinion not likely to be effective.

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(1) Resident to Govt., 28 Dec. 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 March 1832. No. 63.

He also disliked it as "detracting essentially from the independence and sovereignty" of the Nizam. The resident was therefore told that his proposal was not approved and that he should seek an improvement in the Nizam's administration by personal influence and remonstrance.<sup>(1)</sup>

At the same time, Bentinck's expectations in the Nizam were disappointed. When he had withdrawn British control from Hyderabad he had ardently hoped that the new Nizam, with a sincere desire to promote the welfare of his people, would bring to bear the weight of his qualities upon the task of governing his country. Experience, however, revealed his limitations. He had "hardly ever been out of his Zenana till his fortieth year" and had received no training in the art of government. Consequently, soon after his accession he was seen to be withdrawing from public affairs, leaving more and more to his minister Chandu Lal.<sup>(2)</sup> "The hopes," said Metcalfe in his minute of 9 August 1832, "which rested on the new prince have been entirely disappointed. He has taken no interest in the welfare of his people. He has exercised

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 24 Feb. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 March 1832. No. 76;  
Govt. to Resident, 7 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No. 5.

(2) Sutherland, Sketches, 60-61.

no salutary control over the conduct of his minister whose power continues absolute."<sup>(1)</sup> It was anything but this that Bentinck could have hoped for.

Matters drifted till the Directors' despatch of 17 December 1833 was received in May 1834. This despatch, while regretting the effects of British withdrawal from Nizam's affairs, urged Bentinck to take action. Should remonstrance with the Nizam's government fail, and this was anticipated, Bentinck was to consider the means of compelling the Nizam to reform his administration. Such a course was positively ordered.<sup>(2)</sup>

On receiving this despatch Bentinck asked the resident to report the existing situation of the country. He was required to say if any improvement in the Nizam's administration had taken place recently and if he deemed any intervention necessary on the part of the British government.<sup>(3)</sup>

The resident in reply submitted the reports of the

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(1) Metcalfe, minute, 9 Aug. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Aug. 1832. No. 12.

(2) Bengal Despatches, 17 Dec. 1833, No. 17. paras. 20-22. Vol. 124.

(3) Govt. to Resident, 27 May 1834, Board's Collections. Vol. 1494.

superintendents he had called forth on getting the above orders. These reports, the resident said, giving his own opinion, suffered from overstatement. They depicted a state of extreme disorganisation in every department of government. These officers compared things with what had gone on under their personal supervision in former days and were hence prone to exaggeration. But nonetheless, he said, the condition of Hyderabad was deplorable and needed serious reform. And he recommended as a remedy the partial employment of European agency in civil administration which he had earlier suggested.<sup>(1)</sup>

Though empowered and asked to act by the home government Bentinck did not take any action. The introduction of British officers with limited powers of government appeared as an alternative. But on the whole he considered it ineffective and as constituting no lasting solution. Cure in his opinion could be effected when all the powers of government had been taken away from the Nizam and the British government had become responsible for every branch of administration. He seemed to admit the failure of his policy in Hyderabad

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(1) Resident to Govt., 11 July 1834, *ibid.*



and to anticipate a period when increasing confusion in the state would lead to the taking over of the whole administration by the British government. And though he expressed his concurrence in the opinion of the resident that the picture of disorganisation given by the superintendents was somewhat overdrawn his disappointment was writ large. He did not take or recommend any definite step and asked the home government for further instructions.<sup>(1)</sup>

In respect of another matter also relating to Hyderabad Bentinck did not like to interfere. It was the late banking house of Palmer and Co. The house had in the past to a great extent usurped the authority of the government of Hyderabad and was to Bentinck another objectionable aspect of British relations with Hyderabad and another reason for a policy of non-intervention. He thought that the Nizam when left to himself would be able to settle this question like other internal ones. In 1828 Sir William Rumbold was allowed to return

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(1) India Pol. Letters Recd. 25 July 1834. No. 6. Vol. I. The reply to his communication was received after his return in the Directors' despatch of 8 Sept. 1835. No. 39. India and Bengal Despatches, Vol. 6.

to India to realise the claims of this firm.<sup>(1)</sup>

Bentinck, while wishing to follow a course of non-intervention, was cautious. The British government, he said, had become deeply involved in the success and failure of the firm in the past. The matter had not rested on justice. Lord Hastings's favour had given "unlimited credit and authority to the House. The positive disfavour of a succeeding government accomplished their ruin as completely as the former had its excessive prosperity." And he would on his part "obey the orders of the Court whether favourable or otherwise", and not stir the "hornets' nest."<sup>(2)</sup> In this attitude he was also encouraged from England. Astell asked him to be careful in dealing with this matter, reminding him how the Indian government had been affected by it in the past.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) The firm had been repaid at the rate of 12% interest but they claimed the full interest of 18% at which they had advanced the money.

(2) Bentinck to Lindsay, 20 May 1828, Bentinck Papers; Bentinck to John Loch, 21 Feb. 1830, *ibid*; Bentinck, minute, 17 Feb. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 18 June 1830. No.1.

(3) Astell to Bentinck, 20 Jan. 1829, Bentinck Papers.

In England the cause of the late firm was supported by the Board of Control and opposed by the Directors. After a protracted controversy<sup>(1)</sup> the Directors were compelled by the Board by a mandamus from the Court of King's Bench to transmit their orders to India. The despatch of 15 March 1833 containing these orders provided for one of two modes of settling finally the claims of the late firm, either by arbitration, or by a commission appointed under the joint authority of the Nizam and the British government.<sup>(2)</sup> These orders on their arrival in India were conveyed to the resident, and arbitration was eventually resorted to.<sup>(3)</sup> The result was that a sum of about ten lakhs of rupees was awarded by J.M. Macleod of the Madras Civil Service, who had been chosen by Bentinck to act as umpire.<sup>(4)</sup> Thus the matter was brought to an end.

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(1) An account of this controversy is given by Prof. C.H. Philips in East India Company, 280-282.

(2) Bengal Despatches, 15 March 1833. No. 8. Vol. 122.

(3) Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 2 Sept. 1833. No. 8. para. 47. Vol. 29.

(4) India Pol. Letters Recd. 20 April 1835. No. 17. Vol. I.

These were not the only instances in which Bentinck's attitude was that of non-intervention. In the same way, in Rajputana, in Gwalior, and in other states Bentinck deliberately refrained from intervention. His purpose was the same - his desire to see reform at the hands of the princes through their own officers. Where Bentinck saw any hope for the success of the experiment he was willing to go to an extreme length in creating conditions for its success. His withdrawal of civil and military control from Nagpur and his contemplating similar action in Hyderabad show the intensity of his desire and efforts to find a solution of the problem of the Indian states. The British government was deemed to be paramount, but paramountcy was exercised at the last resort in the interests of the people in a particular state and was powerfully asserted by depriving the ruler of all the powers of government. Bentinck would rather advise, persuade and warn than coerce the rulers. Between two unequal powers the stronger in his opinion must necessarily "forbear rather to a fault" in dealing with its less strong partner.<sup>(1)</sup> Failure in his efforts

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(1) Bentinck to Henry Pottinger, 25 Feb. 1834, Bentinck Papers.

filled him with disappointment<sup>(1)</sup> and led him in some cases<sup>(2)</sup> to think of annexation. But on the whole it may be said that his set purpose in following a course of non-intervention was to see the emergence of well-governed states living in harmony and co-operation with the British government.

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(1) Bentinck to Metcalfe, 4 Feb. 1834, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Thus in Gwalior where non-intervention led to internal dissensions and confusion Bentinck wrote that he would be glad if the state came into British hands.  
Bentinck to Stewart, 17 July 1834, Bentinck Papers.

## CHAPTER V

BENTINCK'S ANNEXATIONS

Bentinck's annexations of the three relatively small states of Cachar, Jaintia and Coorg do not indicate a policy of expansion or a solution of the problem of the Indian states as he conceived it. Nor do they appear to be a development of the policy of non-intervention pursued by him as a whole towards the Indian states. In one of the largest states of India, Oudh, even after having received the instructions of the Directors giving him full authority to assume the government of the country Bentinck satisfied himself with another warning to the king. In Hyderabad, while recognising that his policy of non-intervention had not been successful, he shrank from thinking in terms of annexation or decisive intervention. The existence of the Indian states, in his opinion, was to continue, and he sought in a peaceful way to build up relations with them on a basis of mutual co-operation and understanding.

In making these annexations, however, Bentinck was consciously extending the bounds of paramountcy, the concept that was developing to govern British relations with the Indian states over and above the treaty stipulations. Thus in Cachar the British government asserted the right of determining the future of a state under certain circumstances, and it wanted

the rulers of Jaintia and Coorg to recognise rights which it claimed as the paramount power and not because they were stipulated by the treaties. In place of coercing the rulers into acquiescence Bentinck however sought a peaceful recognition of such a position by the Indian princes.

The ruler of Cachar was thus expected to secure the consent of the British government for adoption in the absence of a natural heir. In Coorg the British government sought to assert its claim to give protection to fugitives from the state on humanitarian grounds, and went to the extent of hostilities with the ruler in maintaining that position. In Jaintia the ruler was asked to apprehend and deliver up the murderers of three British subjects in his state, and in the last resort when he failed to comply and was even found to be privy to the crime he was deprived of nearly half of his territories as a measure of punishment.

Such insistence on rights not stipulated by the treaties was not considered a deviation from the general principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states which recognised the right of rulers to manage their own affairs until things went grievously wrong. It was on the other hand a recognition of the increasing responsibility of the British government as the paramount power to play a

benevolent role in its relations with the Indian states. The same role that his government was playing in British India as the guardian of social and moral reform Bentinck also wished to exercise in respect of the Indian states with the co-operation of the rulers.

Thus in Nagpur, where instances of Sati were discovered, the resident was instructed to secure its discontinuance by every possible means. It was not Bentinck's wish, he was told clearly, that

"any thing should be done for this purpose which would be inconsistent with the independent rights of those states but no reason exists to prevent us from using the fair means of persuasion and influence which naturally attaches to us as the paramount power of India to effect an object so desirable to humanity as the abolition of these horrid rites throughout the continent of Asia."(1)

These ideas can be exemplified in the annexations of Cachar, Coorg and Jaintia made respectively in 1832, 1834 and 1835.

Cachar was a small state of 3,769 square miles in Assam. It was taken under British protection in 1824 to ensure the security of the north-east frontier of Bengal against the

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(1) Govt. to Resident, 20 Aug. 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons, 24 Sept. 1832. No.43.



mounting aggression of the Burmese.(1) The Burmese had by 1824 established themselves in Upper Assam and were contemplating further advances into British territory.(2) The importance of Cachar as affording a passage to the Burmese for incursions into Bengal was recognised by the Supreme Government, and it was considered expedient to establish an alliance with Raja Govind Chandra of Cachar. Owing to the usurpation of his authority by the rulers of Manipur he had been compelled to seek refuge in the Company's district of Sylhet.(3) By a treaty concluded on 6 March 1824 the British government became responsible for the protection of Cachar against external aggression, and the Raja on his part bound himself to abide by the advice of the British government in the internal administration of his country. He further relinquished control over his foreign policy and was to pay an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees in return for the protection of his state by the British government.(4)

On the defeat of the Burmese Govind Chandra was restored to his possessions in Cachar. He did not however

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- (1) Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 9 Jan. 1824, paras.19-20;  
Beng. Sec. Letters Recd.31 Jan. 1825, para.13.
  - (2) G.T. Bayfield, Relations with Ava in R.B. Pemberton's  
Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, 37-41.
  - (3) Amherst to Wynn (President of the Board of Control),  
11 Feb. 1824, Home Misc. Series, Vol.673. pp.467-475;  
Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 9 Jan. 1824, para. 12.
  - (4) Aitchison, Treaties, II, Treaty of 6 March 1825, 149-150.

prove to be a strong ruler who could make good his authority in the whole of Cachar. The hilly regions of his kingdom were held by a usurper, Tula Ram, who exercised an independent authority over them.(1) The internal administration of Govind Chandra was also not conducive to his popularity. His government was regulated by no fixed system and recognised little personal freedom. Trade was hampered by restrictions and agriculture suffered from the arbitrary demands of the subordinate officers. The revenue of the government was not large, being estimated at 30,000 rupees, but it was held that under proper management and by giving an impetus to agriculture and industry it could be greatly improved.(2) The Raja further had no children. He was also subject to severe attacks of asthma which were aggravated by his corpulency.(3) Thus while

- (1) Fisher to Jenkins, 17 March 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.112.

Thomas Fisher was in charge of Cachar affairs for sometime before the murder of Raja Govind Chandra in 1830. F. Jenkins was in the survey department of the Bengal government.

Tula Ram was an orderly in Govind Chandra's service who after the assassination of his father by Govind Chandra escaped into the hills and successfully established himself there. Tula Ram joined the Burmese in the invasion of Cachar in 1824 and after the peace continued to exercise independent authority over the hills. Attempts to reduce him to submission were unsuccessful.

- (2) Tucker to Govt., 18 Feb. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. paras. 3-5; Scott to Govt., 27 Aug. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No. 93.

Tucker was commissioner in Sylhet and Scott was agent to the governor-general on the north-east frontier.

- (3) Tucker to Govt., 18 Feb. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No. 81. para. 6.

the internal condition of the state was unsatisfactory, its political future was uncertain.

The internal condition of Cachar and the fact of the Raja's having no heir induced Amherst to think of taking over the state after the death of Govind Chandra. Moreover, it controlled communications between Sylhet and Manipur, and in case of hostilities with the Burmese its possession by either side was considered to be of strategic importance. So in 1827 Charles Tucker, the commissioner in Sylhet was instructed to make an approach to the Raja on the subject of the transfer of his country to the British government after his death.(1)

The Raja before his state was taken under British protection in 1824 had himself shown some predilection for such a transfer. But now when sounded by Tucker on the subject he was loth even to consider any such arrangement. Though Tucker hinted that his annual tribute could be commuted for the rest of his lifetime in case he agreed to the suggestion, the Raja showed himself to be resolutely opposed to it. The payment of the tribute was considered by the Raja to be the mainstay of his power by exalting him in the eyes of his people and entitling him to British protection. Tucker thought that the Raja's objection to the transfer of his country to the British

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(1) Govt. to Tucker, 23 Nov. 1827, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No. 79.

government on his death arose from a feeling that such a measure might throw aspirants to the throne into rebellion if they found the door to their ambition closed. The Raja, however, would not even consider Tucker's proposal and showed himself anxious to adopt a son from the families of the Rajas of the neighbouring states. Tucker advised the Raja to consult the British government before he made any adoption.(1)

In the correspondence that followed his interview with the Raja, Tucker further emphasized the desirability of securing the prior consent of the British government to any adoption the Raja might make. He even let the Raja know that if any adoption was made without prior British consent the British government would not feel itself bound to support the adopted heir if his succession ~~to power~~ was disputed by other claimants. The Raja on his part maintained that it was not incumbent on him to consult the British government on this subject though he would communicate the news when the adoption was made.(2)

Bentinck's proceedings were characterised by moderation and a willingness to go a long way to meet the wishes of the Raja. He approved of the Raja's having been informed that

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(1) Tucker to Govt., 18 Feb. 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.81.

(2) Tucker to Raja and Raja to Tucker, not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.83.

without prior consent the British government would not be bound to extend its protection and support to the adopted heir. But Bentinck did not want to alienate the Raja by carrying the matter further. David Scott, agent to the governor-general on the north-east frontier, was informed that the proposal of transfer should not be urged upon the Raja any more. Such a consummation, when it came, was to be accomplished by the voluntary consent of the Raja. The government's intention, Scott was further told, was not to prevent the adoption of an heir, if that proceeding was in harmony with the usage of Cachar.(1)

A little later Bentinck opposed Scott's recommendation that the British government should intervene in Cachar to abolish the rice monopoly which was stated to be working injuriously to the interests of his subjects. Scott also suggested intervention for the regulation of poppy cultivation, in Cachar. But Bentinck upheld the Raja's right to manage his affairs and Scott was informed accordingly. A policy of setting things right by advice and persuasion was enjoined.(2)

Though asserting his right of adoption the Raja in fact made none. But in April 1830 the question of the future

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(1) Govt. to Scott, not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.84.

(2) Scott to Govt., 19 June 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.85; Govt. to Scott., 3 July 1829, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.86.

of Cachar was suddenly re-opened by his murder. It necessitated the temporary assumption of the government till the future of the country could be determined. Lieutenant Thomas Fraser, the Deputy Quarter-Master General in Sylhet, was placed in charge of the affairs of Cachar and was directed to take his instructions from Scott.(1) He was to conduct enquiries into any claims to the vacant throne and to report on the history and usages of Cachar relating to succession.(2)

The situation was made complex by an offer of Raja Gambhir Sing of Manipur, after Govind Chandra's assassination, to hold Cachar on lease for an annual rent of 15,000 rupees. His request was supported by Captain F. Grant, the commissioner in Manipur.(3) But Gambhir Sing's hand in the murder was suspected, and so a detailed investigation became necessary before a final decision could be made.(4) Bentinck was inclined to accept Gambhir Sing's proposal, if his innocence could be established, in place of the outright annexation of the state to the British territories.(5)

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- (1) Govt. to Fraser, 18 June 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 18 June 1830. No.63.
  - (2) Govt. to Scott, 18 June 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 18 June 1830. No.62.
  - (3) Grant to Govt., 12 Oct. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov. 1831. No.60.
  - (4) Scott to Govt., 27 May 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 18 June 1830. No.48.
  - (5) Gov. Gen.'s Sec. to Bengal Govt., 30 Dec. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 30 Jan. 1832. No.30. para. 1.

The result of the enquiries into the murder of Govind Chandra was obtained in 1832. The evidence supporting Gambhir Sing's complicity in the murder was not conclusive, but he was not cleared of suspicion, and this alone was considered to set at naught his claim on Cachar. Even a consideration of his claim appeared to give an impression of countenancing an offence.(1)

Other claimants to the throne were the widow of the late Raja, and Tula Ram. The widow's claim was found to be inconsistent with the custom of the country: there had been no instance of a woman succeeding to the throne since the accession of the dynasty to which the murdered Raja belonged.(2) As for Tula Ram, even his hands did not seem to be clean of the murder.(3) In addition, he seemed to be a man of low extraction, the son of an attendant by a slave girl. As he had successfully established his authority over the hills it was thought that his claim would be more than satisfied if he was left undisturbed in his possessions there.(4) A body of

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(1) Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 28 Aug. 1832. No.5. para.3. Vol.28.

(2) Scott to Govt., 13 Oct. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.99. para.4.

(3) ibid. para.3.

(4) Fisher to Govt., 27 Sept. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.100. para.15;

Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 28 Aug. 1832. No.5. para.4. Vol.28.

forty chiefs known as the forty "Sempongs", which claimed the right of electing a successor and would have supported the claim of Tula Ram, could not in Fisher's opinion justify the validity of its claim.(1) Thus from all the enquiries that were made it appeared that there was no person who could legitimately claim the throne.(2)

Apart from the question of the legal rights of the claimants to the throne Bentinck also took into consideration the advantages which the people of Cachar and also the British government would derive from annexation. Fisher expressed himself in favour of annexation and the opinions of R.B. Pemberton and F. Jenkins (both in the survey department of the Bengal government) were asked for on the subject of the future of Cachar.(3)

The opinion of these officers was decisively in favour of annexation and against farming Cachar to Gambhir Sing.(4) It was shown that Cachar was sparsely populated and

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- (1) Fisher to Govt., 27 Sept. 1830, *ibid.* paras. 13-14.
  - (2) Scott to Govt., 13 Oct. 1830. Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.99. para.2.
  - (3) Gov. Gen.'s Sec. to Bengal Govt., 30 Dec. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 30 Jan. 1832. No.30.
  - (4) Fisher to Govt., not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No. 106;  
 Pemberton to Govt., 6 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.109;  
 Jenkins to Govt., 21 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.110;  
 Private Letters of Fisher to Jenkins, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.111.



under good management would attract people from the neighbouring territories. There was plenty of waste land in Cachar that could easily be brought under cultivation, and as the soil was fertile it could not fail to attract people from the neighbouring territories. Under a proper stimulus to agriculture and commerce Cachar could be an economic asset of great value yielding a large surplus revenue. Under British administration this money could be profitably employed to promote works of public utility. If placed in the hands of Gambhir Sing the surplus would be spent for puerile purposes as experience had shown. A lakh of rupees on a former occasion, Pemberton said, had been employed for the construction of a temple when half that sum would have

"stacked the valley of Muneepore with cattle and by the purchase of a few mares have renewed the breed of horses now nearly extinct."(1)

Even European capital could be profitably employed in the improvement of the country.(2) In fact, it was pointed out, the process of reclamation had already set in, and since the British management of the state after the death of the Raja about 12,000 persons from the district of Sylhet had come to settle in Cachar and a general improvement in the face of

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(1) Pemberton to Govt., 6 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.109.

(2) Fisher to Jenkins, 2 March 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.111.

the country had become visible. To yield Cachar to the arbitrary rule of Gambhir Sing, which was conceived to be the only alternative to annexation, would be a retrogressive measure that might set people to emigrate to the Company's territory.(1)

There was also the problem of the tribal people (Nagas) on the borders of Cachar. Gambhir Sing, it was stated, would find it difficult to pacify these people or elicit obedience from them. Failing in that he would not hesitate to follow a ruthless policy and threaten them with mass extermination.(2) The people of Cachar, it was also stated, shared with the people of the Company's neighbouring district of Sylhet an affinity of customs and manners which were different from those of Manipur.(3)

The importance of Cachar in case of hostilities with the Burmese was also pointed out. It controlled the route between Sylhet and Manipur and in case of a war would easily supply the requirements of the British forces from a near point, an advantage which under a native government in Cachar could

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- (1) Pemberton to Govt., 6 April 1832, *ibid.* No.109.
  - (2) Jenkins to Govt., 21 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.110.
  - (3) Pemberton to Govt., 6 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.109.

be retarded, if not altogether lost.(1)

These arguments were decisive enough in the determination of the future of Cachar and carried entire conviction with Bentinck at Simla. The annexation of Cachar to the British territories was therefore finally decided on 9 July 1832. A provision was made for the widow of the late Raja, and Tula Ram was confirmed in his possessions in the hills.(2)

The small state of Jaintia on the north-east frontier of India was taken under British protection in 1824 for reasons similar to those of Cachar.(3) By the treaty of 10 March 1824 the British government became responsible for the protection of Jaintia against foreign attack and the Raja agreed to surrender control over his foreign policy and to listen to British advice for the removal of any "unforeseen abuse" in his administration.(4) He was further to co-operate whole-heartedly in any war that the British government might

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- (1) Jenkins to Govt., 21 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.110;  
Pemberton to Govt., 6 April 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 14 May 1832. No.109.
  - (2) Gov. Gen.'s Sec. to Bengal Govt., 13 June 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 9 July 1832. No.15;  
Govt. to Agent on N.E. Frontier, 9 July 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 9 July 1832. No.16.
  - (3) Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 23 Feb. 1824, para.38;  
Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 9 Jan. 1824, paras.19-20.
  - (4) Aitchison, Treaties, II, Treaty of 10 March 1824, Articles 2 and 3, p.164.

wage east of the river Brahmaputra.(1) The treaty, however, differed from that of Cachar in that it did not provide for an annual tribute, and allowed the Raja a greater measure of freedom in the administration of his country.(2)

The co-operation stipulated by the treaty was, however, not received in the Burmese war (1824-1826).(3) Moreover, after the war Raja Ram Sing encroached on territories belonging to the Manipur state which was friendly to the British government. In 1830 he was asked by David Scott, the agent on the north-east frontier, to remove an outpost he had established at the confluence of Kopli and Dimla rivers.(4) The Raja evaded compliance, and before any measures could be taken against him a fresh cause of dispute arose in 1832 when four British subjects passing along the high road in Assam were seized by his officers for human sacrifice. One of these men managed to escape into British territory and narrated the dreadful story. On the news being known repeated demands for the surrender of the offenders were made by the British

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(1) *ibid.* Article 4. p.164.

(2) *ibid.* Treaty of 6 March 1824 with Cachar, pp.149-150; Treaty of 10 March 1824 with Jaintia, p.164.

(3) Robertson to Govt. 27 Oct. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Nov. 1832. No.56.

Robertson held the office of agent on the north-east frontier after Scott.

(4) R.B. Pemberton, Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, 212-213.

government but without success.(1) The involvement of the government of Jaintia itself was suspected. Investigations were made but it was not till 1835 that the British government could come to a conclusion on the fact of sacrifice and the privity of the Raja to the crime.(2)

Another factor that turned into a dispute between the two governments was the exemption of the state of Jaintia from the payment of tribute to the British government while it enjoyed British protection. The matter attracted the attention of T.C. Robertson, the agent on the north-east frontier, on the death of Raja Ram Sing in September 1832. He pointed out that the state was entirely dependent upon British protection for its existence and that a tribute of 10,000 rupees a year could be realised from the grand nephew and successor of Ram Sing, Raja Rajendra Sing as the price of British protection.(3) The question was decided by the Vice-President in Council(4) in November 1832 in favour of Robertson's proposal. Robertson

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- (1) Robertson to Govt., 6 Oct. 1833, Beng. Pol. Cons. 12 Dec. 1833. No.70;  
Govt. to Robertson, 12 Dec. 1833, Beng. Pol. Cons. 12 Dec. 1833. No.72.
  - (2) India Pol. Letters Recd. 4 May 1835. No.1. Vol.I.
  - (3) Robertson to Govt., 27 Oct. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Nov. 1832. No.56.
  - (4) Bentinck was on his tour in the western provinces at the time.

was told that the treaty of 10 March 1824 could be considered as personal with the late ruler. Therefore the British government need not extend their protection to his successor unless he paid for it. Robertson was accordingly instructed to negotiate a new treaty with the new ruler stipulating for an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees.(1)

The Raja was however unwilling to accept that the treaty of 1824 could be considered as personal and not entitling him to protection unless he paid for it. The demand for tribute he considered as directly opposed to the treaty and to "the established regulations of the Company" and as injurious to him. His country, he said, was a small one. Instead of a regular revenue the people rendered personal services when required. And so he considered it impossible to pay a regular tribute to the British government. The Raja also complained of the arrogant behaviour of Robertson at a meeting between the two, when he would not accept a Nazar for the governor-general from him and would not recognise his title of 'Raja' unless he agreed to pay 10,000 rupees annually to the British

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(1) Govt. to Robertson, 5 Nov. 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 Nov. 1832. No.58.

The home government expressed doubts in the contention of the Indian government that the treaty of 10 March 1824 could be considered as a personal one.  
India and Bengal Despatches, 3 Dec. 1834. No.14.  
paras. 93-94. Vol.3.

government.(1)

Robertson, on the other hand, assessed the income of the state at 30,000 rupees and considered the Raja capable of paying even a much greater tribute than the amount called for. He further suggested that the Raja in correspondence be addressed as "Jemadar" in place of the term "Raja" in order to bring pressure upon him to accede to the British demand.(2)

The matter was considered by the Vice-President in Council. It was decided that the demand for tribute was not to be given up though it was felt that the amount of 10,000 rupees proposed by Robertson, which came to about one-third of the state revenues, might be "a greater proportion as tribute than could be discharged with facility". It was further decided that the ruler of Jaintia was entitled to the dignity of the Raja and was therefore to be addressed as such.(3)

Early in 1835 the case of Jaintia came for decision by the governor-general in Council. The evidence submitted by Captain F. Jenkins, commissioner and agent to the governor-general in Assam, who had enquired into the matter, established

- (1) Raja to Gov. Gen., not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons. 6 Feb. 1834. No.141.
- (2) Robertson to Govt., 28 Feb. 1834, Beng. Pol. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.40.
- (3) Govt. to Jenkins, 25 March 1834, Beng. Pol. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.41.

the fact of the sacrifice of the three British subjects and also of the Raja's complicity in the matter while he was yet the heir-apparent to the throne. And it was on these twin factors that Bentinck took his stand. He wrote a letter to the Raja in which he referred to a warning given to the Jaintia government in 1821 when some Jaintia subjects had been seized in the Sylhet district while in the act of dragging away a young man for sacrifice. It had then been stated that if such an attempt were repeated the British government would demand suitable action from the Jaintia government. Now three British subjects had been sacrificed and the Raja was unable to apprehend and deliver up the culprits. In addition, the evidence suggested that the Raja himself, while he was heir-apparent, was cognisant of the offence.(1)

It had been decided therefore, the letter said, to confiscate his territories on the plains. These amounted to about half of his kingdom. He was further asked to bear in mind that if the offence was repeated the remainder of his territories would also be confiscated and such other punishment administered as was deemed appropriate.(2) At the same

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(1) Bentinck to Raja, 23 Feb. 1835, Board's Collections, Vol. 1532.

(2) *ibid.*



time Jenkins's proposal that the Raja might be deposed altogether was not accepted by Bentinck on the ground that it was too extreme a step.(1)

The Raja, however, saw no point in exercising his authority over the hilly regions of his state, which were the most unprofitable parts of his country and where his authority was weak, and at his request his territories over the hills were also taken over and he was pensioned off. Thus the whole of Jaintia came under British rule in 1835.(2)

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- (1) Govt. to Jenkins, 23 Feb. 1835, Board's Collection. Vol.1532. Pemberton states that the reason for confining Raja's rule to the hills was that the hills offered less opportunity for the human sacrifice. Pemberton, Report, 213.
- (2) India Pol. Letters Recd. 4 May 1835. No.1. Vol.I.

The relations of the British government with the state of Coorg were governed by the treaty of 31 March 1793 by which it was taken under British protection and bound itself to pay an annual tribute of 24,000 rupees. The British government was further not to interfere in the internal administration of the country so long as the Raja governed well.(1) In the war of 1799 against Tipu the Raja of Coorg co-operated fully with the British government. In recognition of his assistance, for which he did not accept any pecuniary compensation, and with a view also to encourage "the <sup>imitation</sup> invitation of his example among other tributaries of the Company," Wellesley decided to relinquish the tribute payable to the Company by the treaty of 1793.(2) The Raja was accordingly required, in lieu of his tribute and as a token of his allegiance and devotion to the Company, to present a trained elephant to the British government annually.(3)

Vira Raja, with whom the treaty of 1793 was made, died in 1809, and in accordance with his latest wishes his daughter Devammaji became the Rani of Coorg. But before long she was supplanted by her wily uncle Linga Raja who in a short time made himself absolute in Coorg. As the British government had pledged itself to recognise the wishes of the late ruler in the matter of succession, Linga Raja could not be sure of the support

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(1) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Treaty of 31 March 1793, 280-281.

(2) Wellesley to Raja, 30 April 1799, Madras, Sec. Cons.

25 March 1834. No.2.

(3) Aitchison, Treaties, IX, Sanad dated 16 Oct. 1799, 281.

of the British government and so he sought to isolate his country from British intercourse and be even suspicious of the British. Colonel James Welsh on a private visit to Coorg in 1811 found him distrustful of the British even to the extent of apprehending an invasion of his kingdom. He found the Raja hospitable but saw with surprise that he could not hold free communication with people and that every word he uttered was promptly conveyed to the Raja.(1)

Linga Raja died in December 1821 and was succeeded by his son Vira Raja. His installation had taken place even during his father's lifetime in order to avoid a disputed succession. But he did not feel his position secure any more than his father and was willing to adopt a ruthless policy to get rid of his rivals. Soon after his accession he put to death a number of persons he considered dangerous to himself. He inherited from his father a cruel and vindictive disposition and also a suspicion of the British government. And he walked also on the path trodden by his father. The country was cut off from British intercourse, and Vira Raja had no mercy on those who incurred his suspicion or enmity. To screen the affairs of his kingdom from the eyes of the British government he tightened restrictions on the people leaving and entering Coorg. This had the effect of

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(1) J. Welsh, Military Reminiscences, I, 351.; H.S. Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.2. H.S. Graeme conducted negotiations with the Raja of Coorg for a few months in 1833-34.

practically sealing off his country from the surrounding territories. Visitors and travellers were permitted to enter his country only after obtaining a passport and were closely watched during their stay there. Any infringement of these regulations was summarily punished.(1)

Because of these restrictions no reliable information reached the resident(2) about conditions in Coorg and he was inclined to give credit to the stories of Raja's cruelty that reached him from time to time. In 1826 J.A. Casamaijor, the acting resident, on hearing of a number of public executions in Coorg, deputed Captain T.H. Monk, one of his assistants, to visit the Raja in order to know the real situation. He was also to inspect a road through Coorg which the government of Madras had desired to be re-opened(3) for the use of troops and Europeans under the impression that on the road becoming a frequented route "much of the present system of suspicious vigilance over all travellers would gradually relax."(4)

Monk accordingly proceeded to Coorg and had interviews with the Raja. He was not satisfied with the information that he could gather there, and wrote that the people were suspicious

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(1) Resident to Govt., 10 Oct. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons.

22 May 1827 No.12;

Resident to Govt., 12 Dec. 1829, Madras Sec. Cons.

21 June 1831. No.1.

(2) The resident at Mysore was also in charge of relations with Coorg and so the residency was in Mysore and not in Coorg.

(3) The road had formerly existed but its use was found unhealthy and it had been discontinued.

(4) Resident to Govt., 10 Oct. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons.

22 May 1827 No.12.

and would not give out anything about their country and government. The Raja himself showed a suspicious reserve on the subject of his relations and family. When asked he would merely say, "I am the only male, the rest are all females, I have said so". On the whole, however, Monk formed a favourable impression of the Raja and considered him to possess "capacity" and to be "naturally well-disposed." The Raja appeared curious to know about European things and his questions showed a keen and intelligent mind.(1)

Shortly afterwards, in November 1826, Casamaijor visited the Raja himself and stayed at the capital for three days. He was also impressed with the Raja's disposition and inclined to discredit the several stories of his cruelty over his subjects that had reached him. On the subject of the Raja's government he wrote to the government of Madras(2) of the difficulty of arriving at the truth under the system of restrictions established by the Raja, which precluded anything being said with "a thorough conviction of its accuracy." The Raja himself would give no definite information and Casamaijor saw that he was suspicious, uncommunicative and evasive when asked about his country, his government or his relations.(3)

The Raja further wanted to know from Casamaijor in

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(1) Monk to Resident, 10 Sept. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons.  
22 May 1827 No.12.

(2) The relations with Coorg were under the control of the government of Madras.

(3) Resident to Govt., 20 Nov. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons.  
22 May 1827, No.13.

detail the motives of the British government in asking him to re-open the road through his country as, he said, his people had started talking vaguely about it. He also assured the resident that the system of passports and of restrictions prevailing in Coorg, which the resident advised him to modify was not vexatious, that it had existed in the time of his father and that it was "quite essential" to his scheme of government.(1)

In May 1827 the government of Madras under Sir Thomas Munro took into consideration its relations with Coorg. It was decided that the nature of those relations precluded "any minute or habitual interference with the Raja's administration." The system of passports was therefore not considered to call for intervention. The resident was however asked to call for a report from the Raja on capital punishments in his country.(2)

The demand for a report on capital punishments was accordingly made by the resident. The Raja refused to comply with it as he considered it as inconsistent with his authority and as "an encroachment upon the established usage." The matter was not pursued further by the government of Madras but it seemed to have strengthened the Raja in his intention to stick tenaciously to what he considered as his sovereign authority.(3)

This desire to safeguard his authority made the Raja

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(1) *ibid*

(2) Govt. to Resident, 22 May 1827, Madras Sec. Cons.  
22 May 1827. No.15.

(3) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons.  
25 March 1834. No.2.

insist on a strict observance of the established practices between the two governments. One such practice was the repatriation of fugitives or offenders seeking asylum in one another's territory. Though there was no written agreement to that effect the repatriation of such persons had become usual and a kind of reciprocity had been maintained in its observance. The Raja had invariably acted in conformity with it.(1) The British government, though it had not departed from it, was finding it difficult to continue it as the fate of persons restored to the Raja was found to be uncertain and even insecure.(2)

Thus a person named Channa Vira was restored by A.H. Cole, the British resident, in 1823 at the requisition of the Raja. When later enquiries were made about him by the resident it was given out by the Raja that Channa Vira with his whole family and relations had been carried off by cholera which had swept away hundreds of persons in his country.(3) The veracity of this statement could not be ascertained and a strong suspicion was felt that the man had been put to death at the Raja's order.(4)

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- (1) Resident to Mysore Commission, 18 Juny 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 26 July 1833. No.1.  
 (2) Govt. to Magistrate of Canara, 8 Jan. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 8 Jan. 1833. No.12.  
 (3) Raja to Resident, 8 Sept. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons. 22 May 1827. No.12.  
 (4) Resident to Govt., 20 Nov.1826, Madras Sec. Cons. 22 March 1827 No.13.  
 The Raja's statement was that Channa Vira was an ordinary ryot who had run away from Coorg after coming into dispute with the local authorities but the resident's information suggested his being a relation of the Raja and so his death might have had political reasons behind it. No positive cause of his death or of his being offensive to the Raja was ascertained.

The government of the Raja, though not particularly oppressive and exacting was arbitrary. The land-tax which formed the principal source of revenue was stated by J.S. Fraser in the later years of the Raja's rule to be "extremely light", being 15 per cent. on the gross produce.(1) The land produced abundant rice of the finest kind, which, besides fulfilling the needs of the people, was exported in large quantities to Mysore.(2) Law was customary and was allowed to run its ordinary course unless vitiated by the royal caprice. Thefts and robbery among the people were uncommon and their life was not characterised by litigious disputes. In the later years of the Raja's rule the demand for personal labour on forts, buildings etc. was carried to excess but it seemed to have proceeded from the efforts of the Raja to strengthen the country's defence for an emergency rather than from any malicious intent to bring misery upon his subjects.(3)

But though not characterised by tyranny the Raja's government was despotic and as such governed by his moods and eccentricities. The Raja was an upholder of the absolute authority of kings. He received the homage of his people and was the object of almost blind reverence among them.(4)

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(1) Fraser to Govt., 14 July 1834, Board's Collections, Vol.1515. Fraser was appointed Political Agent to the governor-general for the affairs of Coorg at the beginning of war against Coorg in 1834.

(2) Resident to Govt., 20 Nov. 1826, Madras Sec. Cons. 22 May 1827. No.13.

(3) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834 No.2; Information given by Mudiah, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834 No.2. Mudiah had been in the Raja's service for a long time.

(4) Information given by Mudiah, *ibid.*



They approached his person with "the utmost awe, not daring to raise their eyes but with their bodies and looks bent to the ground they answered Mahaswamy (the Supreme Lord) when spoken to."(1) The majesty that hedged in his person and the exalted notion cherished by him of his sovereignty, however, did not prevent him from making an arbitrary use of his authority. He was remorseless in punishing offences against the state and unscrupulous in getting rid of persons he considered dangerous. He was also at times eccentric in inflicting heavy punishments for trifling causes. Thus it was stated by Mudiah, a person who had been in the Raja's service for a long time, that when a wild elephant had escaped which the Raja had ordered to be detained within a certain area some fifty persons were put to death.(2) Even if this statement were not true, the eccentric disposition of the Raja was testified by other persons also.

What was needed was a clear assertion at an early period of the right of British intervention to prevent a capricious use of authority. But no such action was taken till in 1832 matters were forced to a decision by the flight from Coorg into Mysore of the Raja's brother-in-law, Channa Basava and sister Devammaji with a body of followers. Channa Basava was under watch when he contrived his escape. He with his party

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(1) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834. Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.2. para.136.

(2) Information given by Mudiah, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.2; Resident to Govt., 15 Jan. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 23 Jan. 1833. No.13.

reached the British residency (in Mysore) on 13 September 1832. The original party seeking to leave Coorg consisted of 68 persons. In their flight they excited suspicion and were prevented by the Raja's officers from proceeding further. An encounter was the result in which two of the Raja's soldiers were shot dead and one wounded on the right arm. In the confusion that followed Channa Basava with his wife and 21 followers was able to escape and cross into Mysore. The rest were seized by the Raja's soldiers including an infant son of Devammaji who had been left behind in the flight. Before leaving his house in Coorg Channa Basava had also drugged a guard who watched him at his residence and this man was also stated by the Raja to have died as a result of the intoxication.(1)

The fugitives told the resident that the reason for their flight was that the Raja entertained a criminal passion for his sister Devammaji and had made an incestuous proposal to her through a confidential female servant Badri and had threatened her with dire consequences if she refused.(2) The story could have been a mere concoction told by the fugitives to escape repatriation, which they knew to be certain under the practice between the two governments unless they could say something to excite sympathy and support. But the resident had heard some

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(1) Resident to Govt., 17 Sept. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons. 26 Sept. 1832. No.1; Raja to Governor of Madras, not dated, Madras Sec. Cons. 15 Jan. 1833. No.4; Memorandum by Sheristadar, 5 Dec. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons. 21 Dec. 1832. No.2.

(2) Resident to Govt., 17 September 1832, Madras Sec. Cons. 26 Sept. 1832. No.1. para.5.

rumours previously of the gross sensuality of the Raja and of his acts of severity. He had formed an impression that the mind of the Raja was somewhat abnormal. And so he was inclined to believe the story on account of the "distinctness and simplicity" with which it had been told and to give protection to the fugitives. His action was upheld by the government of Madras.(1)

The Raja put forward a demand for the restitution of these persons who he stated besides causing death to three of his subjects were guilty of attempting a tumult in his country and of declaring Channa Basava the Raja of Coorg.(2) But the Raja's statement seems to have received little consideration. To the resident Channa Basava appeared to be an innocent and injured person though he by no means seems to have been such a saintly figure.(3) The ease with which he could rally some 66 persons when himself under watch without exciting any suspicion in a country where espionage was strong indicates an uncommon degree of tact and adroitness. It was stated by K.K. Menon, a Sheristadar in Malabar, on the basis of enquiries he had instituted among persons returning from Coorg at that time, that Channa Basava had a large following in the country and his cause would

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- (1) Govt. to Resident, 26 Sept. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons.  
26 Sept. 1832. No.2.  
(2) Raja to Resident, not dated, Madras. Sec. Cons.  
13 Nov. 1832. No.1.  
(3) Resident to Govt., 18 Oct. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons.  
13 Nov. 1832. No.1.

have been supported by them against the Raja.(1)

It was further stated by a rice merchant, Puliket Watan, who had gone to Coorg to purchase paddy and returned after a stay of a few days there, that Channa Basava had put up the claims of his son to sovereignty.(2) It was also a fact that the Raja had no children of his own alive at the time and that after him two sisters of the Raja, Devammaji and the Rajammaji and the male child of the former were the rightful claimants to the throne.(3) After the annexation of Coorg also in 1834 Channa Basava had not failed to show his political ambitions. Much to the annoyance of Fraser he assumed the title of Raja. Then Fraser reprimanded him for his boldness.(4) That he might have tried to stir up trouble for the Raja and in some way become obnoxious to him was likely but this consideration was lost sight of in the fruitless negotiations and controversy that followed the flight of the fugitives.

Be that as it may the successful flight of some 23 persons from his country and their refuge in the British territory confirmed the fears the Raja had entertained with regard to his sovereignty and his state. The departure from

(1) Information collected by K.K. Menon, Madras Sec. Cons.

11 Dec. 1832. No.4.

(2) P. Watan's evidence, Madras Sec. Cons. 8 Jan. 1833. No.4.

(3) Resident to Govt., 17 Sept. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons.

26 Sept. 1832. No.1. para.6.

(4) Fraser to Govt., 26 May 1834, Madras Sec. Cons.

3 June 1834. No.3. para3

the practice was manifest and the Raja took alarm ~~and the Raja took alarm~~ and grew more suspicious. In the past not only had the British government delivered up persons fleeing from Coorg, it had also taken no definite action in cases of detention of its own subjects in Coorg.(1) And now not only did it refuse compliance with the Raja's demand for the restoration of his own subjects charged by him with rebellion and murder, it also asked the Raja to send for investigation persons who had been apprehended in Channa Basava's flight.(2)

The Raja wrote letters to Sir Frederick Adam, the governor of Madras, requesting that the fugitives be restored to him and no violation of the practice between the two governments permitted. In reply he was told that the British government had no hostile intention towards his government but was obliged by the law of nations and the dictates of humanity not to hand over persons seeking shelter from his persecution.(3)

In December 1832 the matter was considered by Bentinck on receiving a detailed account of the event. He left it to be settled by the government of Madras with the remark that it appeared clear to him that the refugees should not be given up.(4)

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- (1) Govt. to Magistrate of Canara, 8 Jan. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 8 Jan. 1833. No.12; Govt. to Resident, 16 Dec. 1831, Madras Sec. Cons. 16 Dec. 1831. No.2.  
 (2) Resident to Raja, not dated, Madras Sec. Cons. 13 Nov. 1832. No.1.  
 (3) Adam to Raja, 18 Jan. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 12 Feb. 1833. No.74; Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.2.  
 (4) Gov. Gen's Sec. to Bengal Govt., 7 Dec. 1832, Madras Sec. Cons. 18 Jan 1833. No.1.

His attitude became more clear in a letter to the Raja on 21 November 1833. Its tone though conciliatory was firm. It reminded the Raja of the co-operation of his ancestors with the British government and expressed a wish for the continuance of amicable relations between the two governments. The Raja was asked to rid his mind of any suspicion of the intentions of the British government with regard to his state or authority. But at the same time Bentinck asserted the right of the British government as the paramount power to decide the repatriation of the refugees. The British government, Bentinck said, had no desire to shelter offenders in its territories but

"it must rest with the Paramount Power to determine from the evidence adduced in each case, whether the refugees are really criminals or innocent persons who seek an asylum from unmerited persecution."(1)

There was no reference in this letter to the terms of the treaties or to the existing practice between the two governments, but instead a straight and matter-of-fact assertion of the right of the British government as the paramount power to decide things in a given situation.

The force of these assertions was however lost upon the Raja who looked to the practice between the two governments and who failed to comprehend why when fugitives had been restored to the Coorg government in the past such persons whom he considered particularly obnoxious should be granted protection.

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(1) Bentinck to Raja, 21 Nov. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons.  
13 Dec. 1833. No.1.

A number of factors had contributed to upset the Raja's mind. He had viewed askance the re-opening of the road through his country. The requisition of the government of Madras for a report on capital punishment had also filled his mind with misgiving. Further in 1831 the assumption of the Mysore government was carried out. It set people in Coorg talking vaguely about the fate of the Raja's country. According to an observer, after the dispossession of the Raja of Mysore his own days appeared to him to be numbered.(1) In this context the flight of the fugitives would appear to be the last straw to unsettle him. Some strong expressions of Casamaijor that his country was small and surrounded on all sides by British territory and as such should modify its form of government also added to his <sup>irritation</sup> ~~irritation~~ (2)

In his heated imagination he saw a conspiracy against his rule countenanced and supported by the British government. Before long he expected to find British forces marching into his country to dispossess him.(3) The invasion of his country became so much an obsession with him that the best assurances of the governor of Madras and the governor-general that the British government nourished no hostile intention or ill-feeling towards him and that it would permit no attack on his territory,

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- (1) C. Naik's evidence, Madras Sec.Cons. 25 March 1834, No.9  
He was a sentry in the Raja's service.
- (2) Resident to Raja and Raja to Resident, Madras Sec.Cons. 11 Dec. 1832 no.1; Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec.Cons. 25 March 1834, No.2.
- (3) C. Naik's evidence, *ibid.*;  
Husain's evidence, Madras. Sec.Cons. 25 March 1834, No.3.  
He was a servant of the Company. He went to Coorg occasionally.

from any quarter appeared to him to be of little consequence unless accompanied by the restitution of the fugitives.

The nervous mood of the Raja rendered all efforts at negotiation fruitless. The degree to which his mind had been affected was overwhelming. In his imagination he saw preparations for an attack and British forces round his kingdom. When, under the orders of the government of Madras, Casamaijor paid a visit to the Raja in January 1833 to dispel his fears of an armed invasion, the Raja thought that Casamaijor having posted forces around Coorg was coming with a large army accompanied by Channa Basava. And so he desired Casamaijor to bring with him the same number of people as he had brought when he had visited him in November 1826.(1) In the same way when H.S. Graeme, the resident at Nagpur, was sent on a similar errand in October 1833, at the request of Casamaijor, whom the Raja considered to be personally hostile to himself, the Raja thought that he too was coming on no friendly purpose and refused to receive his visit.(2) Consequently both the missions proved ineffectual.

As a last hope Graeme deputed two Indians named Dara Set, a Parsi merchant of Tellicherry and K.K. Menon, a Sheristadar in Malabar, to go on a friendly visit to the Raja.(3)

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(1) Resident to Govt., 28 Jan. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 7 June 1833. No.4; Raja to Resident, not dated, Madras Sec. Cons. 7 June 1833. No.6.

(2) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.2.

(3) Graeme to Raja, 2 Dec. 1833, Madras Sec. Cons. 7 Jan. 1834. No.35.



This to the Raja seemed to afford an opportunity of avenging himself upon the British government and so he resolved to detain one of these envoys "as a hostage and for the restitution" of Channa Basava.(1) In a distracted state of mind the Raja prepared to risk his all, believing that his cause was righteous and that "the Pure God Maha Deva" would not desert him. He had made frantic preparations for repelling a British attack which he had seen in the offing soon after the flight of Channa Basava from his country. He had enlisted as large a number of people as he could in his own kingdom for military service, and efforts were made also to secure men from outside. At the same time, everything was done to strengthen the country's defences by felling trees across the roads, digging trenches and fixing stockades into them, and erecting batteries at the side.(2)

In February 1834 Bentinck left for Madras.(3) He saw the difficulty of an amicable settlement with the Raja after his warlike preparations and after the detention of Menon. But he thought without much hope that the Raja's "pride may possibly induce him to prefer submission to me, than to the local authority". "I shall avoid the contest", he wrote to Auber "if I possibly can and do it effectively if I cannot".(4)

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- (1) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, *ibid.* para.31.  
Dara Set was allowed to return to Tellicherry.
  - (2) Graeme, Report, 20 March 1834, *ibid.*; C. Naik's evidence, Madras Sec. Cons. 25 March 1834. No.9.
  - (3) His visit to Madras was prompted by his desire to see in person the working of the Mysore government which had been taken over in 1831.
  - (4) Bentinck to Auber, 15 Feb. 1834. Bentinck Papers.

On reaching Madras he wrote yet another letter to the Raja. The Raja's conduct in detaining K.K. Menon was described as a "violation of the law of nations" which the British government could not tolerate. He was asked to desist from the insolent tone of his communications to the British government. Further the right of the British government as the paramount power to demand an explanation from him for his conduct was affirmed. The letter spoke also of Bentinck's conciliatory disposition and of his generous feeling towards the Raja. There was something warm and affectionate in his tone. "My feelings towards you are those of parental kindness and solicitude and I still venture to entertain an expectation of your return to better feelings, and that recourse to hostile operations may yet be averted".(1)

It was a hope against hope. Bentinck's expectation did not materialise. The Raja was obdurate. Menon was not released and so the issue was settled by a resort to war. On 15 March 1834 a proclamation of war was issued by the British government, on 6 April the Raja's capital was taken, and on the 10th the Raja himself made an abject surrender. His men had fought bravely and shown courage and spirit in the short campaign. (2)

The Raja was removed with his family to Bangalore and finally sent to Benares.

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(1) Bentinck to Raja, 17 Feb. 1834, Madras Sec. Cons.

17 Feb. 1834. No.2.

(2) India and Bengal Despatches, 23 June 1835, No.26. para.9.

After the conquest came the question of the disposal of the country. By the right of conquest after a formal proclamation of war Coorg belonged to the Company. Coorg, says Lee-Warner, which received the honour of war also paid the penalty of international law.(1)

In his minute of 3 March 1834, before the commencement of hostilities, Bentinck stated that if there should be any legal heir of the family and if it should be the wish of the people that the country should be governed by him, the preferable course would be to give the country to such an heir.(2) The spirited resistance of the army of Coorg however drew the attention of the authorities more clearly than before to the geographical position of the state which was said by Fraser to be "impregnable if properly defended". The political advantages also of retaining Coorg were advocated with force by Fraser in his despatch to the government of 20 April 1834:-

"--- the central position of the district among the disturbed provinces around, to the turbulent and disaffected inhabitants of which it has long offered a refuge and exemption from punishment, its conversion at once from being a source of extreme evil and even danger, to one of our strongest points of support, all these circumstances combined, will render I should imagine our possession of Coorg though of trifling value as a revenue acquisition, yet of the very highest consequences as a political one".(3)

From a military viewpoint also Brigadier P. Lindesay, in command of the Coorg force, had strongly impressed on Fraser that Coorg was to southern India what a citadel was to a town and

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(1) Lee-Warner, The Native States of India, 109.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 3 March 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 14 March

(3) Fraser to Govt., 20 April 1834, Madras 1834. No.1. para.5.  
Sec. Cons. 25 April 1834. No.3.

had consequently recommended that it should not merely be occupied "but so strongly occupied as to preclude the possibility of our losing it".(1) The government also therefore held that the possession of Coorg would be of "incalculable value" in a political point of view in addition to the advantage it would confer on the inhabitants.(2) Before surrendering, the Raja had put several of his kinsmen to cruel death. Bentinck was shocked. His palace had been "a positive charnel-house and his immediate relations his principal victims". The "Coorg War" he said had resulted in the overthrow of "one of the most bloody tyrants that ever reigned".(3) The absence of a legitimate male heir further helped him to decide in favour of annexation.(4) And so on 7 May 1834 Coorg was annexed by a proclamation.

In short, the conflict in Coorg was between two powers, one of which holding itself paramount, insisted on being so recognised in effect. The assertion of such a role, however, was resisted by the other as a deviation from the established practice. Bentinck's letters to the Raja did not refer to the terms of the treaty or to the practice between the two governments. It was clearly implied that British authority could not

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- (1) Lindesay to Fraser, not dated, Madras Sec. Cons. 6 May 1834, No.10.  
 (2) Macnaghten (Sec. to Gov. Gen.) to Fraser, 22 April 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 6 May 1834. No.10; India Pol. Letters Recd. 12 May 1834. No.4. para.5. Vol.I.  
 (3) Bentinck to (anonymous) 11 May 1834, Bentinck Papers.  
 (4) Macnaghten to Fraser, 1 May 1834, Madras Sec. Cons. 16 May 1834. No.2.; India Pol. Letters Rec. 12 May 1834. No.4. para.2. Vol.I.

be so circumscribed. His insistence was on the Raja's recognition of the paramount position of the British government, the refusal of which led to hostilities. The Coorg case showed that the British government might even resort to war to enforce its claims. It also showed that any extension of the authority of the British government beyond what the rulers considered to be its legitimate bounds was fraught with friction and that the sooner the position was clarified and understood the less would be the chances of such conflict.(1)

In conclusion, it may be said that Bentinck's annexations, while not pointing to annexation as a solution of the problem of the Indian states showed an increasing assumption of the role of the paramount power by the British government. British supremacy involved not merely an observance of treaties by the Indian princes it could also be exercised for settling questions affecting the internal affairs of the states. As a last step Bentinck upheld the corrective role of the British government and hoped that it would be accepted by the princes to the convenience and advantage of both parties.

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(1) The ex-Raja, while in England, in a petition to the British government dated 8 July 1858, said that his "crime" while he was the ruler of Coorg was "a mistaken assertion of his rights of sovereignty". The petition contained a request that he should be allowed to reside in England or India according to his liking. P.P. 1863, XLV (480), 3.

## CHAPTER 6. BENTINCK AND THE MUGHAL.

British relations with the Mughal affected Indian states in a particular way. Not till the influence exercised by the Mughal over the minds of the Indian princes had withered could the British government stand in their estimation as the paramount power in India. Not till then could the problem of British relations with the Indian states be tackled in a realistic way. As British supremacy became more firmly established the British government saw the anomaly of the position of the Mughal emperor. It was evident that the fiction of the nominal sovereignty of the Mughal had to make way sooner or later for the de facto authority of the British government. Bentinck was a firm supporter of the British supremacy and consequently frowned upon Mughal influence as a factor in British relations with the Indian states. He also considered British power in India to be unchallengeable and consequently regarded Mughal authority to be of no practical importance. And he sought to make the existing relationship between the Mughal and the British government on the one hand and the Mughal and the Indian princes on the other conform more truly to the realities of the existing situation. This he meant to do without much display or a blatant exercise of British power. Indeed, he was anxious not to bring a sense of humiliation upon the emperor while asserting British supremacy.

The wars in the time of Lord Hastings had raised the Company to a position of virtual paramountcy but nominally it continued to hold

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an inferior position vis-a-vis the Mughal emperor. The Company's coins were struck in the emperor's name, the emperor bestowed titles and honours upon the Indian princes and in Delhi the British resident offered Nazars (1) in the name of the governor-general to the Mughal four times a year. (2)

Lord Hastings decided to depart from the existing practice of presenting Nazars by a governor-general when he might call on the Mughal at Delhi. He further resolved to discontinue in his correspondence with the Indian princes the use of a seal which had inscribed on it a title "Fidvee Akbar Shah" or "Vassal of King Akbar." The emperor refused to accept this and all correspondence between him and the governor-general ceased from this time (1819-20). (3) In the time of Amherst the Mughal relinquished his demand for a Nazar as a condition to his meeting the governor-general, while Amherst for his part admitted his superiority of rank.(4) The meeting took place in 1827 in Delhi on an equal footing and was considered by Amherst as "a sufficient acknowledgement by the Court of Delhi that the relation of Sovereign and Vassal had ceased to exist, even in name, between the representative of the House of Timoor and

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(1) Token gifts of homage.

(2) Govt. to Resident at Delhi, 6 Dec.1826, Beng.Pol.Cons.22 Dec.1826.No.9b.  
The four occasions were those of Nauruz, Jashan and the two Ids.

(3) Note by Persian Secretary A. Sterling, 6 Sept.1827, Beng.Pol.Cons.  
21 Sept. 1827. No. 68;

Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 3 July 1828, para. 64, Vol. 20.

(4) Govt. to Resident at Delhi, 6 Dec. 1826, Beng.Pol.Cons. 22 Dec.1826.

No.9b.

the British Government in India." (1) On his return from this visit to the emperor, Amherst further decided against the existing practice of the resident presenting Nazars to the emperor on behalf of the governor-general on certain occasions. (2)

Amherst also proposed to revive the correspondence with the Mughal which had been discontinued since the time of Lord Hastings. The form of correspondence between the governor-general and the Shah of Persia was taken as a model. It acknowledged the superior rank of the latter but did not indicate any "vassalage or political dependence" on the part of the former. Negotiations for arranging the correspondence on this basis were successful and from this time onwards the correspondence between the Mughal and the governor-general involved "nothing derogatory" to the British government and approximated "as near to equality" as could be expected under the circumstances. (3)

Before Amherst's departure from Delhi the emperor in a paper presented to the governor-general put forward a claim to the augmentation

- (1) Gov. Gen's Sec. to Bengal Govt., 3 March 1827. Beng. Pol.Cons. 23 March 1827. No.11;  
Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 3 July 1828, para. 62. Vol. 20.
- (2) Govt. to Resident, 1 Feb.1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 1 Feb.1828, No.3.para.2.
- (3) Govt. to Resident, 27 July 1827, Beng.Pol.Cons. 21 Sept.1827. No.65;  
Note by Persian Secretary, A.Sterling, 6 Sept.1827, op.cit.  
The governor-general even after this change addressed himself as "Niyazmund-i-Durgal-i-Illahee" i.e. "suppliant of the Throne of Almighty," a phrase used in correspondence with the King of Persia.



of the royal allowance on the basis of a communication (1) made to the late emperor by the resident at Delhi in 1805. This claim was not accepted by Amherst and the emperor was informed accordingly.(2)

Against this decision the emperor made an appeal to the home government in Bentinck's time. He selected as his agent the reputed Indian Ram Mohan Roy and conferred on him the title of Raja. Bentinck was greatly annoyed at this appeal over his head. Ram Mohan's title was consequently not recognised by the Supreme Government and copies of certain official papers asked for by the emperor were not furnished. But the emperor was firm in his resolve to approach the home government and Bentinck's attitude softened. He made a virtue of necessity. Official opposition to the mission was withdrawn. (3) Privately, however, he expressed himself against Ram Mohan's mission being officially accepted by the home government. (4) Nor did he favour any augmentation of the emperor's allowance. He could not see an end of the "evil", he told Auber, if the British government continued to encourage and maintain "all the children, wives and concubines that this family in its multiplying sub-divisions

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- (1) For a discussion of this paper see J.Sutherland, Sketches, 172-173  
 (2) Govt. to Resident, 1 Feb.1828, Beng.Pol.Cons. 1 Feb.1828. No. 3.  
 (3) P.Spear, Twilight of the Mughuls, 46-47.  
 (4) Bentinck to Auber, 11 May 1832, Bentinck Papers.

will be too happy to beget --- " (1)

In England a long controversy raged between the Directors and the Board of Control over Ram Mohan's mission, (2) and eventually it was decided to increase the emperor's allowance to fifteen lakhs of rupees per annum on the condition that the increase be accepted by the Mughal emperor "in full satisfaction of all claims of every description." The actual amount of three lakhs which the increase amounted to was left to the discretion of the Supreme Government for distribution among the members of the royal family. (3) The emperor, however, refused to accept the increase on these conditions, and so the provision came to nothing. (4)

Bentinck sought also to discourage the Indian princes from looking to the Mughal for titles and honorary distinctions. In November 1829 the resident at Hyderabad, W.B.Martin, forwarded an application from the Nizam and the heir-apparent with Nazars on the occasion of the Nizam's accession to the throne to be presented to Mughal. (5) Bentinck did not approve of Martin's receiving the application and the Nazars. Martin was told in future to conform to the policy of the government of discouraging Indian princes from observing forms expressive of "fealty to the pageant

- (1) Bentinck to Auber, 2 April 1832, Bentinck Papers.
- (2) For a description of this controversy see P.Spear, Twilight of the Mughuls, 46-49, 53-54
- (3) Bengal Despatches, 13 Feb. 1833, No.5. Vol. 121.
- (4) Beng.Pol. Letters Recd. 2 Sept. 1833. No.8. paras. 42-44. Vol. 29; India and Bengal Despatches, 1 May 1835. No.14. Vol. 4.
- (5) Resident to Govt., 25 Nov. 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons. 26 Dec. 1829. No.57.

throne of Delhi." (1)

At the same time Bentinck did, not seek to assert British supremacy so aggressively as to bring a sense of humiliation to the emperor. In October 1829 the acting resident at Delhi, F.Hawkins, urged on the Supreme Government the discontinuance of "unnecessary and humiliating disbursements" in the form of Nazars made by the resident and his assistants to the Mughal and his family (principal wife and heir-apparent) but was told that no change in the existing practice was desired.

(2)  
Hawkins was temperamentally averse to such deference as was shown to the emperor and the emperor disliked him intensely. At the end of 1830 matters came to a head when the emperor complained of studied disrespect received from Hawkins from the moment of his assuming the duties of the residency. He was stated to have humbled the royal dignity in a number of ways. He had, the emperor said, entered into the inner courts of the palace on horseback with his retinue all mounted, had presented a Nazar to the heir-apparent with one hand, had sat on a chair in the presence of the queen and had on one occasion even refused a royal present. Other breaches of etiquette were also cited. (3) Bentinck on hearing these charges expressed surprise and grief at the "extraordinary conduct" of Hawkins, which was calculated "to excite in the bosom of that

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(1) Govt. to Resident, 19 Dec. 1829, Beng. Pol.Cons. 26 Dec. 1829. No. 59.

(2) Acting Resident to Govt., 8 Oct. 1829, Delhi Residency and Agency Records, Vol. I, 378;

Govt. to Acting Resident, 30 Oct. 1829, *ibid.* 381-382.

(3) King to Gov. Gen., not dated (Recd. 1 Jan. 1830) Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Jan. 1830 No. 42;

King to Gov. Gen., not dated (Recd. 1 Jan. 1830) Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Jan 1830 Nos. 43-44.

dignified and venerable personage the feelings of alarm, disgust and resentment." And feeling that the king's complaints were not without foundation he decided to afford him immediate satisfaction. Hawkins was accordingly deprived of his charge pending a satisfactory explanation of his behaviour. (1) In a letter to the emperor Bentinck spoke of his solicitude for his "welfare and happiness" and his desire to prevent the occurrence of any further "annoyance and distress" to him. (2) Bentinck was not satisfied with Hawkins's explanation. It did not remove from his mind the impression that Hawkins had been "wanting in the proper observance of the established forms of etiquette to which all natives of rank attach so much importance and which are peculiarly due from the British representatives towards the Royal Family at Delhi---". Accordingly he was not re-instated in his former position. (3)

Deference shown to the emperor was however in Bentinck's opinion to give way when it might prejudicially affect British supremacy. In 1832 a controversy arose when the Mughal emperor claimed

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- (1) Govt. to Hawkins, 5 Jan. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Jan. 1830. No. 45; Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 14 Oct. 1830, paras. 142-145. Vol. 26.
  - (2) Bentinck to King, 5 Jan. 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 8 Jan. 1830. No. 47.
  - (3) Govt. to Hawkins, 19 March 1830, Beng. Pol. Cons. 19 March 1830. No. 7; Beng. Pol. Letters Recd. 14 Oct. 1830. paras. 147-148. Vol. 26.

In his minute of 17 Feb. 1830 Bentinck stated that he would have liked to confirm Hawkins in his appointment at Delhi but for the "miserable squabble" in which he had been engaged with the emperor "upon points of etiquette and state, totally opposed to that considerate and kind, if no longer necessary policy of respecting the dignity and of treating with respect that fallen Family."

Bentinck, minute, 17 Feb. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 18 June 1830. No. 1.

the right of bestowing ad limitum any title or honour on any prince who applied to him without any reservation. This claim was founded on a Persian version of an English despatch from the government to the resident written in 1828. The Persian version seemed to warrant the interpretation put forward by the emperor and the agent referred the matter to the decision of the government. (1) The immediate occasion for this dispute was the desire of Lakshman Sing of Patun, a feudatory of Jaipur state, to receive some honorary title from the emperor. (2) The claim made by the emperor on this occasion was not accepted by Bentinck and it was decided that in future the privilege of the emperor to confer titles was to be strictly confined to the members of the royal household and whenever other persons of respectability presented Nazars or received dresses they should be admitted to these honours only with the consent of the British government. (3)

More instances of princes looking anxiously to the emperor for honours were found and likewise discouraged. In June 1832, the political agent at Ambala, G.R. Clerk, reported the "tenacity" of the states of Rajputana in clinging to "the observance of forms" which indicated their acknowledgement of Mughal supremacy. He also brought to the notice of government that the agents of protected Sikh states were

- (1) The residency was converted into an agency in 1832 and W.Fraser appointed agent to the governor-general.
- (2) Agent (Fraser) to Govt., 16 June 1832, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 July 1832. No.16.
- (3) Govt. to Fraser, 20 Aug.1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 24 Sept. 1832. No.33.

clandestinely attending the Mughal palace in Delhi in search of honours. It seemed "preposterous" to him that these states should be "squandering their resources in cultivating the goodwill of the king's ministers" and should be anxious to secure favours that were still being dispensed from the "ruins of the Mussulman Tukht." (1) To put a stop to this the agent at Delhi was told that the emperor was not to be allowed to receive the agents of the Indian princes without a reference to the British government. Agents of other states, he was told, could be introduced in his presence to the Mughal but no unrestricted intercourse was to be permitted. (2)

As time went it became more and more clear that the Mughal sceptre had become a thing of the past and was giving way to the inexorable facts of the day. In 1835 when a reform of the currency was undertaken and a rupee of 180 grains established as the uniform coin of all the presidencies the name of the Mughal emperor was conveniently dropped.(3) It was as if another nail had been driven into the coffin of Mughal sovereignty.

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- (1) Agent (Clerk) to Govt., 4 June 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 30 July 1832.No.6.  
 (2) Govt. to Fraser (agent at Delhi), 20 Aug.1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 24 Sept. 1832, No.32;  
     Bengal Govt. to Gov. Gen's Sec. 30 July 1832, Beng.Pol.Cons. 30 July 1832. No. 7.  
 (3) Beng. Fin. Letters Recd. 8 April 1835. No.10. Vol. 46.

The actual reform of the currency was carried out shortly after Bentinck's return but the decision was taken by Bentinck in council. *ibid.*

## CHAPTER 7. OPENING THE INDUS.

In the nineteenth century the security of the north-western frontier of India was a source of constant anxiety to the Indian government. Early in the century the danger from Zaman Shah's threatening power on the north-west led Lord Wellesley to send a mission to Persia, which, according to him, by forcing Zaman Shah back to his dominions kept India safe. (1) The political treaty concluded with Persia by Captain Malcolm in 1801 provided for mutual assistance against aggression either from the French or the Afghans. (2)

A few years later Tilsit, marking the height of Napoleon's power, led the Indian government to despatch a series of missions to Persia, Afghanistan, the Panjab and Sind for establishing friendly relations. After 1815 a new factor emerged in the increased strength of Russia. She had played an important part in the fall of Napoleon, by 1815 she had gained enormously in territory and resources, and she was thenceforward looking for further gains. The treaties of 1814-15 providing for the settlement of Europe and determining the relations of the European states made Russian expansion in Europe difficult. Her advance in Asia, with the Persian and Turkish empires tottering into decay, was easier. It meant no breach of treaties with the European states and offered less chance of friction with them. To Britain, however, with an empire in the east, Russia's expansion in Asia, bringing her

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(1) Wellesley, memorandum of 7 Aug. 1840. The Wellesley Papers

(L.S.Benjamin) II, 367.

(2) Aitchison, Treaties, XII, Treaty of January 1801, 41-42.

influence nearer India, was a matter of considerable anxiety and British policy towards the Central Asian states was influenced by that consideration.

By the time of Bentinck's governor-generalship the danger of a Russian advance on India was engaging the attention of the authorities in India and England. (1) In India the Supreme Government had in 1824 considered it of great importance that "the British influence in the councils of Persia should be maintained unimpaired" and that "the intrigues and designs of Russia in that quarter should be watched with a jealous eye." (2) Malcolm both in England and India emphasized the importance of maintaining "the independence and respectability" of Persia and of not destroying in her a strength which could enable the British government to resist the encroachments of Russia "from the banks of Araxes to those of the Ganges." (3) Lord Canning in England showed himself to be no alarmist and was willing to effect a negotiated settlement with Russia on Persian and Turkish issues and "to meet confidence with confidence." (4) The Duke of Wellington, on the other hand, felt that British interests were so deeply involved in Persia and Turkey as to render co-operation with Russia difficult in view of her

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- (1) C.W.Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations 1815-1840," Cambridge Historical Journal, Vol.III, No.1. (1929) 47-73.  
 (2) Beng. Sec. Letters Recd. 16 July, 1824.  
 (3) Malcolm to Wellington, 12 Dec. 1826, Kaye, Malcolm, II, 454-455.  
 (4) Canning to Strangford, 1825, quoted in Crawley, op. cit. p.53.



designs on those powers. (1) In contrast with Canning's compromising attitude and Wellington's caution Ellenborough, who became the President of the Board of Control in September 1828, showed himself to be thoroughly imbued with the fear of Russian designs on India. In the decline both of Persia and Turkey he saw incalculable danger to India. (2) The defeat of Turkey by Russia at Erzerum in 1829 caused him deep mortification. It was a personal affront, he wrote in his diary, "a victory gained over me." (3) The treaties of Adrianople (September 1829) and of Turkmanchai (February 1828) which increased the influence of Russia in the councils of Turkey and Persia disturbed him greatly. He further aspired to the Foreign Office and did not hold a high opinion of the ability of Lord Aberdeen as Foreign Secretary. And he was himself preparing despatches for the Foreign Office on Turkish affairs. (4)

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- (1) Wellington to Canning, 21 Nov. 1826, Malcolm, II, 453;  
Wellington to Ellenborough, 9 Oct. 1828, Wellington's Despatches (A.R. Wellesley), V, 117-119;  
Journal of Mrs. Arbuthnot, II, 211, 303-304.
- (2) Ellenborough to Wellington, 22 Aug. 1829, Wellington's Despatches (A.R. Wellesley) VI, 100;  
Ellenborough to Wellington, 15 Oct. 1829, *ibid.* 227-231.
- (3) Ellenborough, Political Diary, II, 22 Aug. 1829. p.88.
- (4) Ellenborough to Wellington, 15 Oct. 1829, Wellington's Despatches, (A.R. Wellesley), VI, 227.

As he regarded a Russian advance on India as not only practicable but also easy he was willing to adopt a forward policy to counteract the Russian menace. If the Russians occupied Khiva, he wrote in his diary, the British government was to retaliate by occupying the Panjab and Kabul. (1) He found the chiefs sharing his fears of the Russian designs and therefore willing to co-operate with him. (2) In his views he was also influenced by his assistant in the secret department of the Board, B.S. Jones. Jones had well defined views on the subject of the Company's foreign policy and urged a forward course in relation to the Central Asian countries. In regard to the Indian states also which were misgoverned his advice was to interfere with a strong hand and even to annex them. (3) In him, it has been observed, Ellenborough found a person whose views were in happy harmony with his own, and the result was a series of despatches on the subject of external policy. (4)

Soon after the treaty of Adrianople Ellenborough decided to act in a determined manner. To bolster up Persia against Russia he called upon the Indian government to supply 12,000 small arms to the Persian government. (5) A few days before the Treaty of Adrianople

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(1) Ellenborough, Political Diary, II, 30 Oct. 1829, 123.

(2) Ellenborough, Political Diary, II, 3 Sept. 1829, 92;  
Ellenborough to Wellington, 19 Dec. 1829, Wellington's Despatches  
(A.R. Wellesley), VI, 328.

(3) B.S. Jones, Papers relative to the Progress of British Power in India, 167.

(4) C.H. Philips, East India Company, 268.

(5) Board's Secret Drafts, 7 Dec. 1829. Vol. 7.

he had asked the Indian government not to refuse Persia the assistance of British officers for training Persian troops, a step he considered necessary for strengthening Persia. (1) In December 1829 he desired the Foreign Office to supply the Board with the fullest information about the Russian position and establishments in the Caspian, and the military and political condition of the states of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand, and the Indian government was asked to obtain similar information from the envoy in Persia. (2) He looked upon commerce as the means of establishing British influence in the Central Asian states and told the Duke that the chairs "lend themselves most willingly to the project of repelling the Russian commerce from Cabul and Bokhara, by carrying our goods directly up the Indus," and that his instructions upon that subject would be ready to go to India by the first ship in January 1830. (3)

These instructions were detailed in a secret despatch of 12 January, 1830 (4). This despatch referred to the ambitious designs of Russia in Asia. Even if, it was stated, a Russian attack on India might not succeed the "moral effect" it was likely to produce in India and among the princes made the British government view such a possibility with anxiety. (5) The government of India was therefore to seek to establish its influence in the Central Asian states commanding the route to India by trading with them. For that purpose it was intended to establish a direct way for British goods up the Indus in place of their being sent first to the western provinces of India and then through the

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(1) Board's Secret Drafts, 24 Aug. 1829, No. 2., Vol. 7.

(2) Board's Secret Drafts. 19 Dec. 1829, No. 2., Vol. 7.

(3) Ellenborough to Wellington, 19 Dec. 1829, Wellington's Despatches  
(A.R. Wellesley), VI, 328.

(4) Board's Secret Drafts, 12 Jan. 1830, Vol. 7. (Continued over....)

Panjab and Kabul to Bokhara. (1)

The political effects of commerce were to be kept in sight. With a view to explore the commercial capacity of the Indus it was suggested that a present of English dray horses to Ranjit Sing in return for the present he had sent to England should be conveyed by the Indus. The objections of the Amirs to the passage of the horses through their territories were anticipated. And it was held that while the British government did not intend any hostilities with them it could not also "permit any jealous feeling on their parts (sic) to close the navigation of the Indus, should it appear to offer results not only commercially but politically important which but for them would be attained." (2)

Not satisfied with the official despatches alone Ellenborough was also writing privately to Bentinck to explain his point of view. (3)

Bentinck did not share Ellenborough's exaggerated fear of Russian designs on India. If they were real he considered the danger to be distant and not worth serious attention. On the other hand Russian expansion in Asia appeared to him to be natural and obvious. As Russia, he thought, could not match her strength with Britain in Europe her

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{Continued from previous page}

(5) *ibid.* para. 8.

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(1) *ibid.* para. 17.

(2) *ibid.* para. 38.

(3) Ellenborough to Bentinck, 22 May 1830, Bentinck Papers.

Similarly G. Everest who went to India as Surveyor General in 1830 let Bentinck know Ellenborough's view on the subject.

Everest to Ellenborough, 16 Nov. 1830, Ellenborough Papers. Box 12.

ambition was likely to take an easterly direction and she would therefore make it a point to extend her influence in Persia. The Russo-Persian war of 1826-27 showed that Persia was powerless to resist Russian influence. As Persia could not resist Russia in arms he considered it likely that the two countries might combine. It was the interest of Persia herself, he held, to maintain her independence, and if she did not choose to do so, no amount of money and resources that Britain might spend in bolstering her up could save her from coming under the Russian influence. (1)

Russian influence in Persia was no cause of alarm and Bentinck apprehended no immediate danger from Russia to India. The best way of providing against Russian designs was to be in full possession of the proceedings of Russia, Persia, and other countries of Central Asia to enable the British government to act quickly in an emergency. He did not share the zeal of Malcolm, then governor of Bombay, who held the Persian connection to be of supreme importance to the British government and who later urged that if Russia became predominant in Persia "we must, as an act of preventive policy, establish a commanding influence in Sindh." (2) He rather found himself in agreement with Metcalfe who stated that if Russia resolved to establish her influence in Persia, the British government could do little to prevent it. (3)

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- (1) Bentinck, minute, 28 Oct. 1828, Beng. Sec. Cons. 29 Nov. 1828. No. 66
  - (2) Malcolm, minute, 1 Sept. 1828, Beng. Sec. Cons. 29 Nov. 1828. No. 59;  
Malcolm, minute, 9 Aug. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 14 Oct. 1830. No. 4.
  - (3) Metcalfe, minute, 2 July 1828, Beng. Sec. Cons. 3 July 1828. No. 1;  
Bentinck, minute, 28 Oct. 1828, Beng. Sec. Cons. 29 Nov. 1828. No. 66

In the commercial schemes of Ellenborough, Bentinck was, however, willing to co-operate fully. They not only served a political purpose in establishing British influence but they also suited his own enthusiasm for employing the great rivers of India as channels of communication and commerce. He believed in the laissez faire economics of his time and in the removal of impediments to trade. (1) The Indus seemed to him to have great commercial potentialities and he wanted to exploit them.

Soon after his arrival in the country his attention was drawn to "the practicability and advantage of establishing a steam navigation up the Ganges" as an aid to commerce. If the rivers could be opened as channels of transport he saw great benefits to the country. It would encourage commerce, facilitate contact between people of different parts and contribute to the efficiency of administration by establishing greater control over the localities. It would also strengthen the government in a military point of view by shortening the lines of communication. It would further make possible a reduction in the military establishments of the country and the saving could be used for erecting works of public utility. In short, the development of river transport he considered to be a means of all-round improvement. (2) Inland steam navigation was a subject upon which he bestowed considerable attention and at the close of his administration he prided himself upon its comparative success. (3)

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(1) Supreme Govt. to Directors, 5 Feb. 1833, No. 1. Boards Collections.  
Vol. 1506;

Supreme Govt.'s Notice on the regulation of trade on the Ganges  
and the Jumna, dated 12 Dec. 1832, *ibid.*

(2) Bentinck to Loch, 12 Aug. 1828, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Bentinck's address to the mercantile community, The Friend of India,  
12 March, 1835.

Urged by Ellenborough he resolved to explore the commercial capacity of the Indus, the use of which he considered to be the monopoly of no single state. On the receipt of the secret despatch of 12 January, 1830 he asked the government of Bombay which conducted British relations with Sind to supply information on the subject of the Indus navigation. (1) It was to report also on the feasibility or otherwise of the plan suggested by Ellenborough of sending the horses for Ranjit Sing by the Indus. (2) The findings of the investigation made by the government of Bombay were strongly in favour of the project. Malcolm emphasized the importance of Sind in a political and military sense and considered the proposal to send horses to Ranjit Sing to be "quite feasible." (3)

The survey of the Indus had indeed engaged the attention of Malcolm quite independently of the Supreme Government. In 1829 Lieutenant Alexander Burnes of the Bombay Service had been employed by him in the work of exploring the Indus but Bentinck did not approve of this because of the offence it might give to the Amirs, and before Burnes could finish his work he was recalled. And so Burnes because of his previous experience was now recommended by the government of Bombay as

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- (1) Sind was divided into three separate principalities - Hyderabad (Lower Sind), Khairpur and Mirpur. Hyderabad and Khairpur commanded the main route by the Indus and it was their governments that were principally concerned with the navigation. Hyderabad was governed at the time by Murad Ali, Khairpur by Mir Rustum and Mirpur by Sher Muhammad.
  - (2) Supreme Govt. to Bombay Govt., 14 May 1830; Beng. Sec. Cons. 14 May 1830. No. 3.
  - (3) Malcolm, minute, 9 Aug. 1830, Beng. Sec. Cons. 14 Oct. 1830. No. 4.

admirably qualified for the task of exploring the Indus. (1)

At the suggestion of the government of Bombay a large carriage was added to the dray horses to be presented to Ranjit Sing and the whole plan was put into operation in the face of strong opposition from Metcalfe. In a long and forcible minute Metcalfe described the attempt at a survey of the Indus without the consent of the Amirs and without disclosing the object, as unwarranted, inexpedient and above all unnecessary. It was unwarranted, he said, as it contravened the law of nations. The Amirs had the same right to object to "the surveys of their river and their territories that any power of Europe has to protect its fortresses from the inspection of foreign engineers." The British government, he said, had no right to interfere with the sovereign rights of the Amirs within their own territories. It was further inexpedient as it would tend to alienate the Amirs and defeat the very object worth striving for in case the fear of Russia at any time turned out to be real, namely union and friendship with the Amirs. (2)

Lastley he considered the attempt at surveying the river unnecessary. Its underlying reason was a fear of Russian invasion which he considered exaggerated. A large army of invasion Russian finances and resources could not support; a small one would be inadequate to the task. The difficulties of supplying the needs of a regular army on the march through the intermediate countries, of making good the ravages of disease and climate and of keeping open the line of communication with

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(1) Malcolm, minute, 9 Aug.1830, Beng.Sec.Cons. 14 Oct.1830. No. 4

(2) Metcalfe, minute, 25 Oct.1830, Beng.Sec.Cons. 29 Oct.1830. No. 1.



the home country for reinforcements and supplies were obstacles difficult to overcome. Further, a Russian attack could not come as a surprise. Russia had first to establish herself in the intermediate countries before she could think seriously of invading India and the British government would have time enough to prepare for and cope with the invasion when it really occurred. The best thing, he said, was not to be alarmed and "to do nothing until time shall show what we ought to do." (1)

Bentinck's interest in commerce, however, strengthened by the orders of the home government, was too great to be overcome by the opposition of Metcalfe and so the plan went ahead. Burnes was put in charge of the mission to Lahore. He took with him five dray horses (one stallion and four mares), a carriage and a letter from Ellenborough for Ranjit Sing. He sailed from Mandvi in Cutch on 21 January, 1831 in a fleet of four boats. The objection of Murad Ali, the Amir of Hyderabad, to the passage of the boats by the Indus had been anticipated and the expedition had therefore been launched without his prior consent. Burnes, therefore, and not unexpectedly, met with an uncivil reception. His boats were searched, he was deprived of all supplies and on the whole treated with abuse. He decided to return. A second voyage by him a few days later was equally unsuccessful. His little fleet was scattered by a powerful storm and he himself was not permitted to land. Proper negotiations were therefore begun for the reception of his mission, and he sailed from Mandvi for the third time on 10, March. (2)

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(1) *ibid.*

This time no hostility was shown to him and he was allowed to land. But once in the country every attempt was made to dissuade him from proceeding further. The difficulties of the voyage were magnified. Rocks, quick sands, whirlpools and shallows, he was told, rendered passage impossible. A successful journey to Lahore by boat, it was said, had not been heard of in the memory of man. If at all successful, the Amir said confidently, it would be three years before it could be accomplished. (1)

The Amir was full of suspicion about the objects of the mission and believed that Burnes would soon be followed by an army of conquest.(2) He showed himself to be as afraid of the superior power of the British government as he was suspicious of their ulterior motives. His letters to the British government were couched in friendly and conciliatory terms while he did all he could to prevent Burnes's advance by water. When pressed by Burnes he consented to allow the boats' ascent by the Indus

(Continued from previous page)

- (2) Burnes, personal narrative and journal, 23 Sept.1831, Heng.Sec.Cons.  
       • 25 Nov. 1831. No. 23;  
       Native agent in Sind to Pottinger, 1 Feb.1831, Beng.Sec.Cons.  
                                 18 March 1831. No. 6.

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- (1) Murad Ali to governor of Bombay, not dated, Beng. Sec. Cons.  
                                 18 March. 1831. No. 10;  
       Burnes, personal narrative, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 23.  
 (2) Burnes, personal narrative, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 23;  
       Native agent in Sind to Pottinger, 1 Feb.1831, Beng.Sec.Cons.  
                                 18 March 1831. No. 6.

provided Burnes himself took the land route. This seemed to defeat the whole object of the mission and Burnes refused emphatically to advance a step unless accompanied by his charge. He quitted the boats to remonstrate in person. Eventually, after a week's negotiation at Tatta, he obtained the Amir's consent to his passage. (1) Another influence that prevailed on the Amir in allowing Burnes to pass was a threat from Ranjit Sing. Ranjit had learnt of the deputation of Burnes's mission to him and had sent a large force under Ventura in the direction of Shikarpur. (2)

On 19 April, Burnes had an interview with the Amir. Burnes followed up the interview by presents consisting of various European articles including a clock and two pairs of glass candle-sticks. Contact with the Amir showed his extreme simplicity in some matters. He sent Burnes anxious messages to the effect that the presents which the latter had brought should be sent to himself alone and on their receipt was not satisfied with all of them. He even naively sent his minister to Burnes to know if the clock and candle-sticks, which he did not find of much use, could not be exchanged for some other presents which Burnes might be carrying for others. (3)

From Hyderabad Burnes passed into Khairpur where his reception was "cordial and kind." The Amir showed himself in every possible way to be a friend of the British government and anxious for a treaty

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(1) Burnes to Pottinger, not dated, Beng. Sec. Cons. 17 June 1831. No. 2

(2) Wade (Political agent at Ludhiana) to Govt., 21 May 1831.

Beng. Sec. Cons. 24 June 1831. No. 6.

(3) Burnes, personal narrative, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov. 1831. No. 23.

alliance with it. (1)

From Khairpur he went to the country of Bhawal Khan, the chief of Bhawalpur, where his reception was no less friendly than at Khairpur. (2)

Finally he reached Lahore in July 1831 and delivered the presents to Ranjit Sing. Ranjit was gratified to receive them and the good wishes, they conveyed. He gave Burnes a warm and cordial reception. At the same time he showed little tenderness for the Amirs of Sind who had held up Burnes's passage and told him that for some time he had been holding his army ready in order "to chastise the barbarians of Sind" in case they delayed Burnes's advance any longer. (3)

Burnes's voyage occupied sixty days in a favourable season. His daily progress averaged twenty miles by the course of the river and gave him a good opportunity of exploring the region. (4) As a keen observer of men and things he submitted long reports on different aspects of Sind history, politics and geography. (5)

He reported the uninterrupted navigation of the Indus from the sea to Lahore, a distance of about a thousand miles. Besides affording every facility for navigation the river was particularly suited for the application of steam. "There are few rivers in the world where steam might be used with better effect than on the Indus, it has no rocks or

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) *ibid.*

(3) *ibid.*

(4) Burnes to Govt. 12 Sept. 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 21

(5) Burnes to Govt., 12 Sept.1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. Nos. 20-21.

rapids to obstruct the ascent, and the current does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles an hour." (1) He dwelt also on the condition of the people, the government and the military importance of the Indus which formed "the grand boundary of British India on the West." It was, he reported, navigable for a fleet from Attock to the sea and would conduct an invading army to the heart of India. (2)

After the successful termination of his voyage Burnes went to Simla to give an account of his mission to Bentinck in person. Both the official reports of Burnes and personal communication with him justified Bentinck's "most sanguine expectations." (3) He felt satisfied, he told the governor of Bombay, that "the importance of the river Indus in a political point of view not less than as a route of commerce has not been over-rated." (4)

But he had to settle whether commerce or politics was to be the main object of his pursuit and it was in favour of the former that he decided. Burnes's mission showed the political weakness of Sind and seemed an admirable opportunity for establishing British influence. Of the three principal Amirs, those of Hyderabad, Khairpur and Mirpur, the last two were jealous of the Hyderabad government and showed themselves anxious for protective alliances with the British. (5) In Hyderabad

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- (1) Burnes to Govt., 12 Sept.1831 (No.1.) "A General View of the Indus"  
Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No.21 para 5.
- (2) *ibid.* para. 8.
- (3) Supreme Govt. to Bombay Govt., 22 Oct.1831. Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831.  
No.27.
- (4) Bentinck to Governor of Bombay, 22 Oct.1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831  
No.30.
- (5) Burnes, personal narrative, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 23.  
Burnes, memorandum on Mirpur, 14 Oct.1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831.  
No.29.

itself the apprehended death of the sixty year old Amir Murad Ali presaged before long a struggle for the succession among his sons and cousins. Of the two sons of Murad Ali who were likely to make good their claims to the throne, Nur Muhammad Khan and Nasir Khan, the latter made approaches to the British government to obtain its support in the impending contest for the succession and did all he could to facilitate Burnes's passage by the Indus to Lahore by interceding with his father on his behalf. (1)

Thus circumstances favoured British intervention and the matter came before Bentinck for decision. The British resident in Cutch, Henry Pottinger, whose personal inclinations were for decisive action, emphasized the importance of the issues involved and urged quick decision. It meant, he pointed out, deciding the question of "our acquiring a footing there, which should place at our command, in case of necessity the resources of the country together with the unrestricted navigation of the river Indus." (2)

But Bentinck wanted no entanglement in Sind (3). His experience had shown that political alliances ensuring British protection to states - whether in Oudh, Mysore or elsewhere - brought little satisfaction and more embarrassment. He resolved on avoiding such connection with Sind and confining himself to commerce. His great object, he told Murad Ali, was

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(1) Burnes (No.2) "On the Government and Political importance of Sind"  
Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No.21 paras 8-10.

(2) Pottinger to Govt., 16 April 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 17 June 1831. No. 2.

(3) Supreme Govt. to Bombay Govt., 30 May 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 17 June 1831,  
No. 3.

to see the Indus like the Ganges swarming with boats carrying goods and passengers from one part to another. (1)

Meanwhile Bentinck secured information from other sources. Lieutenant Arthur Conolly of the Bengal Military Service, who had just returned from an overland journey in Central Asian countries, submitted his report on the commercial and military advantages offered by the Indus. (2) Bentinck employed Charles Trevelyan to collect information on the subject of the Indus navigation. Trevelyan had risen high in Bentinck's estimation on account of his fearless exposure of Sir Edward Colebrooke's proceedings at Delhi (3) and had been raised by him to the position of Deputy Secretary in the Political Department of the Supreme Government. (4)

Trevelyan's enthusiasm for reform knew no bounds and he was greatly interested in commerce. His mind was "full of schemes of moral and political improvement, and his zeal boils over in his talk. His topics, even in courtship, are steam navigation, the education of the natives, the equalisation of the sugar duties, the substitution of the Roman for

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- (1) Bentinck to Murad Ali, not dated, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 34
  - (2) Conolly, Report, not dated, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 8.
  - (3) A detailed account of these proceedings is given by Dr.Spear in "Twilight of the Mughals, "The Colebrooke Case," 167-181.
  - (4) Bentinck, minute, 12 June 1830, Beng. Pol.Cons. 18 June 1830. No. 28; Bentinck, minute, 23 Aug. 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No. 2. Bentinck to Auber, 2 April 1832, Bentinck Papers.

the Arabic alphabet in the Oriental languages." (1) On being asked by Bentinck to collect information he pursued the subject diligently and reported in favour of opening the river for commerce. He considered this necessary not only for extending commerce in Central Asia and through it British influence in that region, but also for introducing an ordered way of living in Afghanistan, Bokhara and Khiva. If opened to unrestricted navigation the Indus would become "the means of introducing into the heart of Asia a taste for the comforts and enjoyments of civilised life." The Amirs, he held, could not be permitted to baulk this enterprise of the British government and were to be coerced into submission if persuasion was of no avail. (2)

In a political point of view, he argued, the opening of the Indus would supplant Russian influence in Central Asia. Russian goods, he said, even though of inferior quality, sold in large numbers in the markets of Central Asia because they suffered no fair competition from British goods, which were severely handicapped by the numerous duties levied on their way to those markets. If those barriers were removed and an open and easy way found by the Indus, British goods would soon drive Russian products out of Central Asian markets by underselling them. (3)

All the evidence collected by Bentinck was conclusively in favour of opening the Indus as a channel of commerce and he resolved to do so. But then arose the principal difficulty. Would the Amirs co-operate

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(1) Macaulay to Mrs. Cropper, 7 Dec. 1834. G.O. Trevelyan, The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, I, 356;

Macaulay to Ellis, 15 Dec. 1834, *ibid.* 395.

(2) Trevelyan, Report, not dated, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov. 1831. No. 9.

(3) *ibid.*



in the venture? Their states were outside the British frontier and technically outside British protection also. (1) Besides, the Amirs were suspicious of the British government - more suspicious, Metcalfe said, than any other power in India. They had heard rumours of an alliance between Russia and Persia and their combined advance towards India and they showed themselves alive to this fear. They were alike afraid of the Sikhs and the Afghans. Pottinger's mission in 1831-32 showed that they would have liked mutual defensive alliances with the Company, which would afford them protection against the Sikhs and the Afghans and be at the same time a safeguard against possible British designs on Sind, of which they were also afraid. Commerce by itself did not signify much to them;

But Bentinck was not willing to extend the sphere of the Company's political alliances. Hence Pottinger who was deputed by Bentinck in 1831 to negotiate commercial treaties with the Amirs of Hyderabad and Khairpur had his clear instructions. He was to be cautious in his proceedings and to commit the government to no political undertaking. In fact he was given no authority to conclude any political alliance binding the British government to the support or protection of the Amirs. He was told to employ persuasion and friendliness as his chief weapons in making the Amirs see the advantages of commerce. Bentinck ruled out coercion for it could defeat its own object. If coerced, the Amirs might try to subvert navigation by covert means. Pottinger was also to explain to the Amirs the law of nations as elaborated in Vattel's

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(1) Select Committee Report, P.P. 1831 - 32, XIV, 3.

book which did not permit any single country to monopolise the advantages bestowed by nature on many countries. (1)

Left to himself, Pottinger favoured a different policy towards the Amirs. He had little tenderness for their suspicions and pinned little faith in the course of persuasion enjoined on him by Bentinck. In 1808 when on a mission to Sind under Hankey Smith he had been impressed by their "arrogance and superiority." Their government, he asserted, was characterised by "extortion, ignorance and tyranny" which he considered was "unequalled in the world". (2) The only thing, he thought, that the Amirs appreciated was force and he would have liked to adopt a strong attitude towards them - as suited his own active disposition. The importance of Sind in a political and military point of view meant to him that the British government should not allow itself to be defeated from achieving its purpose in order simply to feed the prejudices of the Amirs. (3) Nor did Bentinck's policy of non-involvement in the internal affairs of Sind appeal to him. He would have liked to

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- (1) Govt. to Pottinger, 22 Oct. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 25 Nov. 1831. No. 27.  
 (2) An account of his mission and impressions is given in his book Travels in Beloochistan and Sind published in 1816. In 1810 disguised as a Muslim he made another journey to explore the regions between India and Persia. In the course of his travels he visited Kirman, Shiraz and Baghdad. In 1825 he was appointed resident in Cutch. National Biography  
 (3) Pottinger to Govt., 16 April 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 17 June 1831. No. 2; Pottinger to Govt., not dated, Beng. Sec. Cons. 18 March 1831. No. 6.

interfere to settle the succession in Sind and establish British influence there. (1) He would have liked to see it under British protection and to offer it mediation in disputes with the Sikhs and the Afghans. (2) Failing that he was not averse to see the subjugation of Sind by a power friendly to the British Government (Shah Shuja). (3) On more than one occasion when disappointed in the course of negotiations with the Amirs he looked to Bentinck for instructions to pursue a strong policy in Sind, but was chagrined to find him dwelling on the virtues of forbearance when a strong power was dealing with a weak and suspicious government like that of the Amirs. (4)

Pottinger's difficulties began to manifest themselves even before he reached Sind. Before he could embark he was informed on behalf of the Amir that the time announced for his visit would coincide with the latter's hunting season and that he should therefore postpone his mission to a later date. (5) Pottinger considered it a frivolous excuse and decided not to postpone his visit. (6) The Amir had been told by his

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(1) Pottinger to Govt., 21 Jan. 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 2 April 1832. No. 3  
para. 13.

(2) Pottinger to Govt. 22 Feb. 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 28 May 1832. No. 9. para 26.

(3) Pottinger to Govt. 3 Feb. 1834, Beng. Sec. Cons. 10 April 1834. No. 22 para 9.

(4) Bentinck to Pottinger, 25 Feb. 1834, Bentinck Papers;  
Govt. to Pottinger, 21 June 1834, Beng. Sec. Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 31.

(5) Pottinger to Govt. 23 Dec. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 6 Feb. 1832 No. 2.  
para 9.

(6) *ibid.* para. 11.

agents that Pottinger was coming with arms in the boats and was to be followed by soldiers. Instructions were therefore issued by the Amir for the boats to be detained and searched on entering Hyderabad before they were allowed to proceed further. So seriously did the Amir think that Pottinger was coming with forces that he took precautionary measures in order not to be forestalled if his apprehensions proved correct. (1) The forces, however, did not appear, and Pottinger reached Hyderabad to carry out his instructions.

He found the Amir's conduct a mass of contradictions. At one time the Amir wished to see him early in order to dispose of his mission as quickly as possible, at another he would delay the interview and tell Pottinger to be at his ease. (2) Pottinger did not want to spoil the chance of success in the negotiations by any precipitancy and hence did not show any anxiety for an early interview. Much to his resentment, however, he discovered that the Amir had put a different construction upon this. Pottinger's boats had been detained and left behind, and so the Amir concluded that his apparent hesitation in not seeing him was because of his not having any presents with him. Pottinger found it so unbearable that he let the Amir know in plain language that presents (which in fact he had brought and which he later made over to the Amir) were meant to be a sign of friendship for the government of Hyderabad and were in no sense to be regarded as an obligation on the British government. (3)

When finally the interview took place the Amir was full of

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- (1) Pottinger to Govt. 31 Jan.1832.Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832. No. 7;  
Native Agent to Pottinger, 15 Jan.1832, Beng.Sec.Cons.19 March 1832.No.3.  
(2) Pottinger to Govt., 31 Jan.1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832. No. 7.  
(3) Pottinger to Govt., 31 Jan.1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832. No. 7.,  
paras 5 - 6.

professions of friendship for the British government and enquired after the health of the governor-general and the governor of Bombay in warm terms. (1) Negotiations on the subject of Burnes's mission were begun and the Amir appeared anxious to gain his own object before meeting the wishes of his guest. Commerce was not a significant thing for him, and he was agreeably surprised to find Bentinck's letter, which Pottinger brought, referring only to the advantages of commerce if the uninterrupted navigation of the river were permitted. He had heard of the Russian designs in the east and showed himself to be equally concerned to prevent an attack on India which spelled the ruin of his own dominions. In return for opening the river to commerce and for his co-operation in any measure that the British government might undertake against the Russian designs he wanted some provision for the safety of Sind against the Sikhs and the Afghans. (2)

It was however difficult to weigh the Amir's fear of the Sikhs and the Afghans against his fear of British intentions. The draft of the treaty submitted on his behalf to Pottinger showed that he feared the British government as keenly as he did the Sikhs and the Afghans. Articles 3 and 6 of this draft provided for the navigation of the Indus and stated that the friends and enemies of one party should become the friends and enemies of the other. Article 9 said that the British government would expect the Afghan and the Panjab governments to respect Sind territory as much as if it were a part of British possessions. But

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(1) *ibid.* para. 23.

(2) Pottinger to Govt., 31 Jan. 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 2 April 1832.  
No. 7.

article 5 provided for a special promise on the part of the British government that they would not attempt to seize Shikarpur and other places mentioned. (1)

The Amir was also boastful. He asserted that the British government had no good soldiers to match his own. He let Pottinger know that if only the Sindian soldiers and the British money could combine the two governments could easily hold the world in defiance. (2) To Pottinger the whole behaviour of the Amir appeared "a mass of outward friendship, distrust, gasconade and puerility mingled with extreme pride and ignorance." (3) And he emphatically refused even to discuss the draft treaty, which spoke of the Amir's suspicions in such an avowed manner and which also went beyond the scope of his instructions. (4) Negotiations with the Amir could not be conclusive, though the Amir consented to the navigation of the river and Pottinger asked for his permission to proceed to Khairpur. But Khairpur was close to Shikarpur and the Amir was all suspicion about British intentions with regard to this territory. Every attempt was therefore made to dissuade him from going there. But Pottinger pressed the point and the Amir at last consented. (5)

But before Pottinger could leave for Khairpur came the disturbing news that the eldest son of Ranjit Sing, Kharak Sing, was coming in the

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(1) *ibid.* para. 42.

(2) Pottinger to Govt., 5 Feb.1832.Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832. No.13.

(3) Pottinger to Govt., 31 Jan.1832.Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832.No.7.para 45.

(4) *ibid.* para. 43;

Pottinger to Govt., 3 Feb.1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832.No.9.para 3.

(5) Pottinger to Govt., 5 Feb.1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 April 1832.No.13.

direction of Shikarpur with a large army. (1) The Amir was upset. He suspected collaboration between the Sikhs and the British government against the Sind. Bentinck was then in the western provinces. He had previously met Ranjit at Rupar in October 1831, and the Anglo-Sikh solidarity which this betokened seemed ominous to the Amir. (2) Preparations for meeting the apprehended Sikh invasion were begun and Pottinger was told that under such circumstances the safety of the country was the paramount consideration, that his mission in Sind was over and that he could return. (3) Pottinger understood the extreme fear of the Amir and showed his readiness to postpone his departure for Khairpur till circumstances were favourable and the Amir was willing. His conduct appeared to afford great satisfaction to the Amir. (4)

The apprehended invasion of Sind by Kharak Sing did not take place and Pottinger was allowed to proceed to Khairpur (1832). He met a friendly reception. Mir Rustum agreed to accept all the conditions of the commercial treaty proposed by Pottinger. But as negotiations proceeded Pottinger learnt that Mir Rustum was not a free agent, and was under the influence of his relations. Eventually a treaty was signed stating that the Khairpur government would accept the same conditions for the use of the Indus and of the roads of Sind as were accepted by the Amir of Hyderabad. (5)

(1) Pottinger to Govt. 11 Feb.1832.Beng.Sec.Cons. 28 May 1832.No.5.para.27.

(2) *ibid.* paras. 28-29.

(3) Pottinger to Govt. 22 Feb. 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 28 May 1832. No. 9.

(4) Pottinger to Govt. 11 Feb. 1832. Beng. Sec. Cons. 28 May 1832. No. 5. paras. 30-31

(5) Pottinger to Govt., 14 April 1832. Beng.Sec.Cons. 2 July 1832. No.9.

Pottinger came back to Hyderabad and after some further negotiations a commercial treaty was signed providing for the use of the Indus and of the roads of Sind on three conditions (1) :-

1. No person was to carry military material by the Indus and the roads of Sind.
2. No armed boat was to be taken by the river.
3. British merchants were not to settle in Sind. Having come and transacted their business they were to return to India.

By means of a passport system the government of Hyderabad was to know in advance of the arrival of merchants in its territories. (2)  
The two governments also agreed "never to look with the eye of covetousness on the possessions of each other." (3)

It was further stipulated that the government of Hyderabad was to fix "certain proper and moderate duties" on goods passing Sind. (4)  
However, the statement of duties brought forward on the Amir's side appeared to Pottinger to be "exorbitant", (5) and eventually the matter was left open for further discussion and settlement between the Hyderabad and British governments. (6)

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(1) Pottinger to Govt., 1 May 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 18; Aitchison, Treaties, VII, Treaty of 19 June 1832, 354-355.

(2) Aitchison, ibid. Article 4. 355.

(3) ibid. Article 2. 354.

(4) ibid. Article 5. 355.

(5) Pottinger to Govt., 1 May 1832. Beng. Sec. Cons. 6 Aug. 1832. No. 18. para 9.

(6) Aitchison, Treaties, VII, Supplementary Treaty of 19 June 1832, Article I, 356.



Apart from obtaining the consent of the Amirs for the navigation of the Indus Pottinger had also been told by the government to keep in mind the question of the suppression of plunderers inhabiting Parkur, a dependency of Sind. After the negotiations for the opening of the Indus had been almost concluded the subject was brought forward by Murad Ali himself. The Amir urged the need for co-operation between the British, Jodhpur and Sind governments for the suppression of these predatory gangs whose strength was estimated at 2,000 men. After some negotiations an article was arranged in the treaty for this purpose. (1)

Thus Pottinger's perseverance and firmness succeeded, and the Amirs yielded their reluctant consent to the navigation of the Indus. The question of tariffs remained to be settled between the two governments. A report on the subject of the Indus tariffs was prepared by Trevelyan under Bentinck's instructions. The Bombay government and Pottinger were asked to submit their remarks on the subject. Eventually Bentinck decided that a toll of 570 rupees per boat would be the highest amount that could be imposed from the sea to Rupar, and Pottinger was asked to negotiate with the Amir of Hyderabad on that basis. In order to ensure the smooth working of the system Pottinger was asked also to secure the Amir's consent to the residence of a British European agent at the mouth of the Indus where the goods were to be transferred from the sea boats to the river boats and the toll realised. (2)

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(1) Pottinger to Govt. 1 May 1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 Aug.1832. No. 18; Aitchison, Treaties, VII, Supplementary Treaty of 19 June 1832, Article II, 356.

(2) Govt. to Pottinger, 10 Oct.1833, Beng.Sec.Cons. 10 Oct.1833. No.14.

A week later after the issue of these instructions Murad Ali died and the negotiations had to be suspended for some time. In the confusion that followed his death, Bentinck's attitude was one of non-intervention. (1) The Amir's death brought four persons into power, with Nur Muhammad Khan as the principal Amir. The four Amirs delayed coming to terms on the subject of the Indus tariffs. (2) They were firmly opposed to the stationing of an European agent in their territories and to any attempt at surveying the mouths of the river. In 1834 a difficult situation arose when a number of boats engaged in surveying were seized. (3) Pottinger wrote to the government urging strong action, but Bentinck counselled patience and forbearance. (4) Not until the Amirs were convinced that procrastination would not pay did they yield. Pottinger on his part consented to their opposition to an European agent in Sind, and a treaty acceptable to both the parties for the regulation of the tariffs was drawn up. But when the Amirs were presented with the draft of the treaty for their signatures they stated that the draft had to be referred to the Amir of Khairpur for his consent. Pottinger felt disgusted at the "chicanery" of the Amirs and suggested that the government should blockade the ports of Sind and assemble forces in Cutch to bring the desired pressure upon the Amirs. (5) Even Bentinck's patience appeared to be at an end and Pottinger was instructed to inform the Amirs

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- (1) Govt. to Pottinger, 21 Nov.1833, Beng.Sec.Cons. 21 Nov.1833. No. 4.
  - (2) Pottinger to Govt. 6 Dec. 1833, Beng.Sec. Cons. 3 Jan. 1834. No. 9;  
Pottinger to Govt. 3 Feb.1834, Beng. Sec. Cons. 10 April 1834. No.22.
  - (3) Pottinger to Govt., 5 Feb. 1834, Beng.Sec.Cons. 10 April 1834. No.23.
  - (4) Bentinck to Pottinger, 25 Feb. 1834. Bentinck Papers.
  - (5) Pottinger to Govt., 10 Aug; 1834, Beng.Sec.Cons. 5 Sept.1834. No. 1.

that the British government would not be trifled with in securing the Amirs' compliance with their plighted word. (1) At length the Amirs put their signatures to the draft of the treaty which provided for a toll of 570 rupees per boat from the sea to Rupar to be divided between Sind, the Panjab, Bhawalpur and the British governments. (2)

Similar treaties for the navigation of the Indus and the regulation of the tariffs were concluded with the Nawab of Bhawalpur and with Ranjit Sing. (3) Their attitude was known to be friendly and their consent was obtained without much difficulty. In March 1835, a few days before leaving the country, Bentinck wrote to the Secret Committee that his efforts in opening the Indus had been attended with complete success. (5)

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- (1) Govt. to Pottinger, 5 Sept. 1834, Beng.Sec.Cons. 5 Sept. 1834. No. 2.
  - (2) Aitchison, Treaties, VII, Treaty of 2 July 1834, 357. The Treaty provided for the residence of a British native agent in Sind.
  - (3) Aitchison, Treaties, VIII, Treaty of 22 Feb. 1833, 402-404;  
Treaty of 5 March 1835, 405-406.
  - (4) Aitchison, Treaties, VIII, Treaty of 26 Dec. 1832, 146-148;  
Treaty of 29 Nov. 1834, 149-150.
  - (5) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 5 March 1835.

Bentinck's proceedings in Sind, with commerce as their main purpose, were not devoid of political importance. They involved check-mating the designs of Ranjit Sing on Sind. Ranjit saw in them a cause of disappointment and even of apprehension. They appeared to take Sind out of his hands and to bring the British influence much nearer his own country. He showed concern about the object of Burnes's mission in Sind in 1831. (1) At one time even a meeting with Bentinck at Rupar filled his mind with misgiving. He suspected some foul play and was hesitant to cross the Sutlej to meet Bentinck on the day fixed. The meeting seemed likely to be cancelled. Astrologers were consulted and they suggested a way out of the difficulty. It was recommended that Ranjit should present apples to Bentinck, which, if accepted readily, would betoken British sincerity. When the meeting took place on 26 October, 1831 Ranjit presented the apples, which were accepted without demur, and the incident passed off without trouble. (2)

Ranjit did not conceal his own designs on Sind. On it, Cunningham says, his "fondest hopes" lay, and his disappointment over his defeat was acute. When Burnes met him at Lahore in 1831 he was frank in stating his desire to conquer Shikarpur and asked if he could capture it with five regiments of infantry and some artillery. He asked also how the British government would view such an enterprise. When Burnes suggested that he had better consult the governor-general before he embarked on such a venture he was prompt to reply that his treaty with

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(1) Wade to Govt., 5 May 1830, Beng.Sec.Cons. 10 June 1831. No. 2.

(2) H.T.Prinsep, Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab, 162-163. Prinsep was secretary to the governor-general and present at Rupar.

the British government gave him a free hand on the right bank of the Sutlej. (1)  
 A little later, when he met Bentinck at Rupar, in conversations with the governor-general's secretary, he wanted to know the policy of the British government in regard to Sind and whether the two governments could not combine to effect its easy conquest. (2) But Bentinck while at Rupar gave Ranjit no hint of his schemes for opening the Indus to navigation. It was feared that, led by his ambition to conquer Sind, Ranjit might in spite of his friendly disposition contrive to counteract the negotiations by "intrigue and secret working." (3)

And so it was not until two months after Pottinger had been sent on his mission to Sind that Wade was asked to inform Ranjit of the British intentions in sending Pottinger there. (4) Ranjit, however, was not idle in the interval and was making anxious enquiries from the Amirs' envoys in the Panjab as to Pottinger's errand in Sind. (5) When Wade broached the topic to him in February 1832, he was not easily satisfied that only commerce was intended on the British side and asked Wade suspiciously the description of vessels which were to be used in navigation and whether they were to carry guns and troops with them. He shrewdly perceived that his being made a party to the project was meant to keep him from pursuing his ambitions in that quarter and his

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- (1) Burnes to Pottinger, 1 Aug. 1831, Beng.Sec.Cons. 25 Nov.1831. No.28.  
 (2) Prinsep, memorandum, 30 Oct.1831. Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 Jan.1832. No. 8.  
 (3) Prinsep, Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab, 168.  
 (4) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 2 July 1832. para. 172.  
 (5) Pottinger to Govt., 6 April 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 4 June 1832, No. 32.

disappointment was evident. (1) Though he agreed to the opening of the Indus and the Sutlej for commerce, and thus to co-operate in Bentinck's commercial schemes, he did not give up his designs on Sind. In the time of Lord Auckland his interest in Sind was again seen to be keen and he was then told frankly that British government would not view any attack on Sind with indifference. (2)

Bentinck himself would not follow a policy of coercion in Sind but events in Central Asia led him to give the ex-ruler of Afghanistan, Shah Shuja, a free hand in Sind. Though Sind had long ceased to pay tribute to the Afghan empire of which it had once formed a part, its nominal dependence on Afghanistan continued. Afghanistan was in a weak and divided state (3) and exercised no control over Sind, but it was clear that a strong and united Afghanistan would seek to make good the claims it had lost. Fear of the Afghans was reflected in the desire of the Amirs to form a defensive alliance with the British government.

Bentinck had at first considered the danger from Russia to be only remote, but his complacency began to be disturbed by news from Persia as the years passed. The Treaty of Turkmanchai (February 1828)

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(1) Wade to Govt., 13 Feb. 1832. Beng. Sec. Cons. 19 March 1832. No. 10.

(2) Govt. to Wade, 22 Aug. 1836. Enclos. to Beng. and India Sec. Letters Rec'd. Vol. 45.

(Continued over....)

increased Russian influence in the councils of Persia and under her inspiration Persia looked eastwards. (1) In 1831 Prince Abbas Mirza of Persia meditated an expedition into Khorasan, over which Persia held only a nominal hold, and in 1832 he had conquered it. Encouraged by success he thought of gaining distant lands. As he told Campbell, the acting envoy in Persia, he was desirous of "extending Persia to her ancient limits." (2)

In April 1832 the Prince was reported to be preparing for the conquest of Herat. (3) He was even credited with the intention of making an attack upon India. "Not only in Khorassan itself, " stated Kaye, who was at that time in India, "in Afghanistan and Toorkistan, but in the bazaars of Bombay, was the advance of the confederate armies of the two states into Khorassan, and thence upon Herat and India, generally discussed and believed." (4)

Bentinck, while still far from thinking of political alliances that would involve the British government in the affairs of Central Asia, prepared to meet an emergency. "The progress of Abbas Mirza's arms," he told the Secret Committee, "and the reputed designs of Russia appeared to me to call urgently for the adoption of some measures to

(Continued from previous page)

(3) Dost Muhammad held Kabul, his nephew Jalalabad; Kandahar and Peshawar were held by his brothers. Herat was possessed by Kamran of the Sadozai clan.

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- (1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 2 July 1832. para. 192.
- (2) Campbell to Supreme Govt., 6 Nov. 1831, Beng. Sec. Cons. 12 March 1832. No. 3.
- (3) Campbell to Supreme Govt., 9 April 1832, Beng. Sec. Cons. 10 Sept. 1832. No. 14.
- (4) Kaye, Afghan War, I, 150-151.

enable me to procure accurate information of the real state of the parties and of the progress of events in that quarter ---" (1) Wade, the political agent at Ludhiana was accordingly instructed to depute a person to Kandahar to keep the government fully informed of events in Kandahar, Bokhara and Khorassan. (2) In 1833 Bentinck sanctioned the appointment of an agent at Kabul to obtain "quick and correct intelligence of all events in Central Asia as well as of the intrigues and proceedings of Russia in those quarters." It was also to help in establishing friendly relations with the ruler of Kabul, Dost Muhammad, who had shown a desire for "a more intimate relation" with the British government. Friendly relations with Kabul were also considered by Bentinck to produce a salutary effect upon the Amirs of Sind who had yielded so reluctantly to the navigation of the Indus and might covertly seek to upset British commerce. (3)

Meanwhile the person who saw his chance in these happenings was Shah Shuja. Driven from power soon after Elphinstone's mission in Afghanistan he had passed through several sad experiences in the course of which he was for a time a prisoner in Ranjit's hands. In 1816 he found refuge in British territory at Ludhiana and was also granted a pension to enable him to pass his days in political retirement.(4) But he was an ambitious person and from a safe distance never ceased to see

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(1) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 2 July 1832. para. 191.

(2) Govt. to Wade, 16 May 1832, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 5-6.

(3) Bentinck, minute, 1 June 1833, Beng.Sec.Cons. 6 June 1833. No.7.

(4) Aitchison, Treaties, XI, 309.



visions of regaining his lost throne. In 1818 he made his first effort to recover Afghanistan but returned disappointed to the place of his asylum. Failure, however, did not discourage him, and time served to sharpen his desire. In 1827 his proposal for another attempt was not encouraged by the British government. In 1829 another proposal to the same effect was alike cold-shouldered. (1) But the reported designs of Russia upon India gave him the opportunity of making his request carry weight with the British government. He played upon their fears, showed chances of easy success and held out promises. "As Abbas Meerza is come to Herat, if I can procure assistance from the British Government, I will proceed to that place, and the whole country from Khorassan to the Oosbecks, and to the boundary of the sea will fall into my hands, and become friendly to the British." (2)

His request for help was forwarded to the government with favourable comments by Wade and his assistant Major R.C. Faithful. (3) They quoted the precedent of 1818 when it was pointed out Shah Shuja was helped with an advance of 6,000 rupees, being a month's stipend, and 2,000 rupees as road expenses. They considered the chances of the Shah's success easy. "The Barukzyes at Candahar," Wade observed, "are the weakest and least enterprising members of their family in possession of power; and the Shah seems sanguine of success." (4)

Thus approached Bentinck was inclined to interpose no obstacle

(1) Govt. to Resident at Delhi, 12 June 1829, Beng.Pol.Cons.12 June 1829 No.28.

(2) Shah Shuja to Bentinck, 11 Oct.1832. P.P.1839, XL (113), 6.

(3) Wade to Govt., 11 Nov.1832. P.P. 1839, XL (113), 9.  
Faithful to Govt., 4 Dec. 1832, P.P. 1839, XL (113), 10.

(4) Wade to Govt., 11 Nov. 1832. P.P. 1839. XL (113), 9.

in the way of Shah Shuja and even to meet his wishes partly. In place of the six months' advance of his stipend which he requested, four months' was sanctioned and the monthly pension to his family was allowed to continue during his expedition. Wade was also asked to help the Shah in recovering money which he had reported to be due to him from the bankers of Ludhiana. (1) Thus helped, Shah Shuja set out on his venture in January 1833.

Another person concerned in Shah Shuja's enterprise was Ranjit Sing. On receiving reports of his intentions and efforts Ranjit became uneasy and made anxious enquiries about the attitude of the British government towards the Shah's reported movements. (2) He was anxious that the two governments should have a common policy: "--- if he advanced, it should be with the consent of both; if he was prevented advancing, it should be with the consent of both." (3)

Bentinck found it difficult to explain his help to Shah Shuja. It meant in effect supporting him morally and to a limited extent materially. Its open avowal however, he feared, might alarm the Amirs, Ranjit and the Afghans. It would be a deviation from the policy of non-intervention that he was pursuing. He had himself told the Shah in October 1832 that "the British government religiously abstains from

- (1) Govt. to Wade, 19 Oct. 1832. P.P. 1839. XL (113), 9;  
Govt. to Faithful, 13 Dec. 1832. P.P. 1839. XL (113), 10.  
(2) Faithful to Wade, 6 Feb. 1833, P.P. 1839, ~~XXX~~. XL (113), 13.  
(3) Fraser (agent to Gov. Gen. at Delhi) to Govt., 21 Feb. 1833,  
P.P. 1839. XL (113), 15.

intermeddling with the affairs of its neighbours." (1) This was also the time (1832-33) when Bentinck was receiving presents from Dost Muhammad with every desire of friendship with the British government.(2) Hence Bentinck considered it necessary that he should appear disinterested. Ranjit was accordingly told that the British government viewed Shah Shuja's expedition with "indifference." (3) Thereupon Ranjit took advantage of the British attitude and of Shah Shuja's need to strike an advantageous bargain with him in the form of a treaty whereby the Shah on behalf of "himself, his heirs and successors" formally relinquished all claim to Kashmir, Peshawar and some other places. (4)

Quitting his asylum in January 1833 Shah Shuja proceeded to Bhawalpur and thence to Shikarpur, increasing his forces and collecting money on the way.(5) In Shikarpur he established himself firmly and before long became unwelcome to the Amirs because of his pecuniary demands on them. He threatened to pillage the city unless his demands were met. Rather than yield, the Amirs chose to fight, but in January 1834 they were completely defeated in battle and compelled to sign a

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- (1) Bentinck to Shah Shuja, 20 Oct. 1832, P.P.1839, XL(113), 8.  
 (2) Dost Muhammad to Wade, 2 Dec. 1832, Beng.Sec.Cons. 19 March 1833.No.40;  
 Wade to Govt., 17 Jan. 1833, Beng.Sec.Cons. 19 March 1833, No.40;  
 Bentinck to Dost Muhammad, 28 Feb.1833, Beng.Sec.Cons. 19 March 1833.  
 No.34.  
 (3) Govt. to Wade, 5 March 1833, P.P.1839. XL (113), 15.  
 (4) Treaty of 12 March 1833. Article I. P.P. 1839. XL (113), 31.  
 (5) Lt.Mackeson (agent for the navigation of the Indus) to Wade, .  
 25 May 1833, P.P.1839. XL (113), 17;  
 Wade to Govt., 9 June 1833. P.P. 1839. XL (113), 16-17.

humiliating treaty, agreeing to provide him with men and money and even giving hostages for the fulfilment of his demands. (1)

For a time Shah Shuja's success held out hopes of his victory in Afghanistan. Even Bentinck at one time thought vaguely of the possibility of Sind and Afghanistan being held under one power which in the person of Shah Shuja would be dependent on the British. But such a result he considered at the same time by linking India with Central Asia would create new problems which were best to be avoided. (2) It did not however remain long in suspense whether Shah Shuja was to hold Afghanistan or not. From Shikarpur he advanced towards Kandahar and won another victory over its ruler Kohan Dil Khan who sent an appeal to Dost Muhammad for help. (3) Dost Muhammad rose to the occasion and forgetting the jealousies that had divided the Barakzai brothers marched on Kandahar. Shah Shuja was unable to prevent a junction between the Kabul and Kandahar forces, and in a battle fought on 2 July 1834 lost the day. He fled precipitately from the field and passing through Baluchistan returned to his old asylum at Ludhiana. (4)

In the meantime Ranjit Sing took advantage of the troubled situation of Afghanistan to wrest Peshawar from the Afghans finally. The Sikh commander Nihal Sing, after a successful campaign occupied it on

- (1) Wade to Govt., 1 Feb. 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 19;  
Wade to Govt., 5 March 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 20-21.
- (2) Bentinck to Pottinger, 25 Feb. 1834, Bentinck Papers.
- (3) Wade to Govt., 23 May 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 22-23;  
Wade to Govt., 17 June 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 25-27.
- (4) Beng. and India Sec. Letters Recd. 5 March 1835. paras 51-53.

6 May 1834. (1) Ranjit in announcing his success congratulated Wade on the victory which in his opinion, had brought lustre to the alliance existing between the two governments. (2) Bentinck in turn asked Wade to congratulate Ranjit in a personal capacity. (3)

Dost Muhammad though victorious felt deeply the loss of Peshawar. He threatened a holy war against the Sikhs but could not recover the place. (4) He found little reason to be grateful to the British government without whose connivance Shah Shuja would not have been able to make the attempt. British neutrality was not taken seriously. "The expedition of the Shah," remarks Durand "was regarded throughout the country as countenanced and supported by the British Government, and those well disposed to Dost Mahomed were discouraged by a report apparently so well founded." (5)

Bentinck's giving Shah Shuja a free hand in Sind and Afghanistan and yet disavowing any British support or cognizance explains the dilemma in which Bentinck found himself. On the one hand Bentinck had decided not to have any political alliance with either Sind, the Panjab or Afghanistan. On the other hand he did not mean to remain a silent spectator of events in an important quarter. How to adhere to a policy of

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- (1) Wade to Govt., 22 May 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 22.
  - (2) Ranjit to Wade, not dated, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 30-31.
  - (3) Govt. to Wade, 27 June 1834, India Sec. Cons. 27 June 1834. No. 3.
  - (4) Wade to Govt., 15 June 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 24;  
Wade to Govt., 7 Sept. 1834, P.P. 1839. XL (113), 38;  
Beng; and India Sec. Letters Recd. 5 March 1835. para. 63.
  - (5) H. Durand, First Afghan War, 20.

non-alignment and yet to provide for a danger from the north-west was the problem. At such a time, when Bentinck had yet to settle his course, Shah Shuja came on the scene with hopes and promises and an answer to what appeared to be a rapidly developing situation in Central Asia. Bentinck decided to try him. It is difficult to say how much Bentinck did in fact expect from him but the result of his decision was unfortunate. He was soon adopting an ambiguous course in which he was officially denying what in effect he was doing - namely countenancing Shah Shuja's expedition.

To conclude, Bentinck opened Sind for British commerce. It was accomplished by peaceful methods rather than by a resort to force. It was also done without involving the British government in any sort of political engagement or undertaking. Bentinck had to face the fears and suspicions of the Amirs and was urged by Pottinger to employ coercive measures but he held on to a milder course of policy and in the end succeeded in his purpose.

Bentinck's measures were further important for the future. In several ways he prepared the background of subsequent events. His policy in checkmating Ranjit's designs on Sind was followed by his successor Auckland. Further, the amity established between the British government, Shah Shuja and Ranjit culminated a few years later in the Tripartite Treaty of 26 June 1838. Dost Muhammad could not reconcile himself to the loss of Peshawar and it was in the midst of Shah Shuja's expedition to Afghanistan that the Afghans finally lost this place to the Sikhs.

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All these events foreshadowed the future. Apart from opening Sind for commercial purposes, in which he was keenly interested, Bentinck was rather led into them instead of having planned or willed them. The extension of British influence in the north-west region of India was clearly enjoined on him by the Despatch of the Secret Committee of 12 January 1830, and while seeking to implement those instructions his great object was to steer clear of any political involvement either in Sind, the Panjab or Afghanistan, and in this he succeeded. But he was not correctly understood and when a few years later Auckland's policy was criticised, Bentinck's name was also included in the censure. And it may appear somewhat odd to find Bentinck being roundly attacked for having permitted Shah Shuja's expedition to Afghanistan by Ellenborough who had himself inspired the trans-Indus movement:

"The origin of the changed feeling of the sovereigns of Afghanistan," Ellenborough observed in 1839 "is to be found in the conduct of Lord W. Bentinck who in 1833 not only did not prevent Shah Shuja from leaving Loodiana on an expedition to Candahar but enabled him to do so, by advancing to him four months pension and engaging to pay the pension as usual during his absence to his family. It was in vain that Lord W. Bentinck declared that he took no part in that expedition. He saw Shah Shuja preparing it on British territory; he enabled him to move by pecuniary advances; and he received him when he returned defeated. The sovereigns of Afghanistan naturally connected the British Government with that expedition. All Central Asia did the same ---" (1)

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(1) Ellenborough, memorandum on Afghan affairs, 23 April 1839, A. Law, India Under Lord Ellenborough, 4 - 5.

These were strong words of censure and indeed true. But it may nonetheless be said that while Bentinck's measures prepared the ground for Auckland's policy it would be wrong to assume that Bentinck would have followed the same course as pursued by Auckland. He was averse to any involvement in Central Asian politics and is indeed reported to have expressed surprise when Auckland had taken upon himself to place Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. (1)

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(1) Kaye, Afghan War, I, 305. footnote.



## CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Bentinck did not see the solution of the problem of the Indian states either in annexation or in any relationship in which they did not exercise real powers of government. At the beginning of his administration he saw them in a decadent condition. Ruling out annexation as the remedy, he proposed by bestowing full authority on the rulers to make them conscious of their powers of doing good to their people. The solution was a radical one and characteristic of his ardent nature. Once convinced of the correctness of his stand he was ready to relinquish not only civil but also military control over the states.(1) If the Indian princes under British protection could manage their own affairs well in peace and friendly co-operation with the British government he considered it preferable to British intervention which produced bitterness and misunderstanding.

Bentinck conceived the internal freedom of the states to be a permanent solution of the problem presented by them and advantageous in many respects. It enabled the states to exist as honourable members of an Indian political

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(1) Bentinck did not contemplate the withdrawal of the subsidiary forces but he did mean, as seen in Nagpur, to give the princes control of their own state forces.

order comprising both them and the British government. It left the British government free to pursue reforms in British India which could not in the last resort fail to react favourably on the states under an intimate contact with the British government. The internal freedom of the states also satisfied Bentinck's feeling that their position had an international bearing and needed to some extent to be resolved by reference to international law. The Indian states by surrendering control over their foreign policies did not remain sovereign states like some of those of Europe but they by that fact or by agreeing to admit British control in internal affairs did not obliterate their international existence in the sense conceived by Vattel, to whom he at times adverts while dealing with the states' problems.(1)

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(1). e.g. India Pol. Letters Recd. 4 June 1834, No. 6. Vol. I. para. 29, p. 65.

"Since men are naturally equal, and their rights and obligations are the same, as equally proceeding from nature, nations composed of men, considered as so many free persons living together in the state of nature, are naturally equal, and receive from nature the same obligations and rights. Power or weakness does not in this respect produce any difference. A dwarf is as much a man as a giant; a small republic is as much a sovereign state as the most powerful kingdom". Vattel, The Law of Nations, "Idea and General Principles", p.54

"We ought therefore to reckon in the number of sovereigns, those states that have bound themselves to another more powerful, by an unequal alliance, in which, as Aristotle says, to the more powerful is given more honour, and to the weaker, more assistance"...

See foot of next page.

Such a connection of the British government with the Indian states which recognised their internal freedom was not considered by Bentinck to be a source of weakness. It was, on the other hand, a means of strengthening the empire, of ushering in an era of co-operation which would make possible "the consolidation of their resources and ours for common defense".

He thought that a policy of non-intervention would also satisfy the princes who had lost their independence and whose submission was associated with memories of the by-gone days when they or their predecessors had exercised an unrestricted sway over their affairs - foreign and internal. It was also to allay such fears as they might entertain about

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(1) (Cont.) "Consequently a weak state that, in order to provide for its safety, places itself under the protection of a more powerful one, and from gratitude, enters into engagements to perform several offices equivalent to that protection, without in the least stripping itself of the right of government and sovereignty; that state, I say, does not cease, on this account, to be placed among the sovereigns who acknowledge no other law, than that of nations."

"There is no more difficulty with respect to tributary states; for though tribute paid to a foreign power, in some degree diminishes the dignity of these states, from its being a confession of their weakness; yet it suffers their sovereignty to subsist entire ..."

ibid. "Of nations or sovereign states", p.2.

their ultimate position in the British Indian political system. Bentinck saw that there was need to establish such confidence in the minds of the princes. In his minute of 25 August 1828, recording the decision of his government to regulate its conduct by a strict adherence to the "very letter" of the treaties, he observed ".... to make these alliances useful to the British government and comfortable to the chiefs themselves there must reign in the minds of all not only no distrust of our ultimate designs but a thorough and intimate conviction that while their feelings of pride and independence will never be offended by our power, their tranquillity, wealth and prosperity can only be assured by our protection". (1)

Another mode of establishing confidence and of exercising a kind of moral influence over the princes was by maintaining closer and intimate contact with them. He thought that if the Supreme Government had its seat at some point in the western provinces (either Agra or Allahabad), it could do so much better than when it was placed at the one

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 25 Aug. 1828, Beng. Pol. Cons. 13 Sept. 1828, No. 1.

extremity of the country, and he contemplated a transfer of the seat of government to the western provinces. His proposal for a change was not accepted by the home government but he urged it on a number of occasions. He considered it an important step in establishing such "an improved order of things that should eventually make better rulers, happier subjects and more useful allies". (1) Before leaving the country he ventured again "most anxiously to urge the question of the seat of government, as that cardinal point of all, on which the earliest reduction of all the discordant, incongruous and diversified particles of which our Great Empire is composed, into one harmonious whole essentially depends". (2)

The policy of non-intervention also accorded well with the measures he was taking in British India of admitting Indians in larger numbers in the revenue and judicial branches of the administration. British intervention as seen in states like Hyderabad had a tendency to increase the number of Europeans, thus narrowing further the scope for the employment of Indians. (3) In Mysore, where he actually intervened, or

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(1) Bentinck, minute, 14 Sept. 1831. P.P. 1833, XXV (418), 56.

(2) Bentinck, minute, 20 June 1834, Bentinck Papers.

(3) Metcalfe, minute, 13 May 1829, Beng.Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2.

in Oudh, where he contemplated intervention, he was specially careful that the number of Europeans did not exceed what he considered to be absolutely essential for the purpose of superintendence. (1) And this consideration was a motive not only in viewing intervention in the states with hesitation but also in withdrawing British control from states like Nagpur and Hyderabad. Thus, when telling Astell that he had sanctioned a modification of the treaty with Nagpur to allow the Raja more internal freedom, he wrote:

"In time of danger it might be necessary for our safety to make all civil and military administration European but now to appropriate ourselves individually every lucrative situation, cannot be good policy." (2)

Lastly, in his resolve to follow a policy of non-intervention Bentinck was strengthened by the policy of the home government until his time. As late as 1826 the Secret Committee categorically repudiated any right of the British government in the internal affairs of the states "except in so far as that right has been established by Treaty."

(1) Supreme Govt. to Mysore Commission, not dated, Beng. Pol. Cons. 5 June 1834. No. 11; Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No. 2.

(2) Bentinck to Astell, 1 Nov. 1829, Bentinck Papers.

In the time of Ellenborough and Grant as Presidents of the Board of Control there was a change in the policy of the home government in favour of extended intervention. But such right was not definitely affirmed. Neither Ellenborough nor Grant was consistent in upholding intervention in respect of all the states on the ground of misgovernment.

Ellenborough, who severely censured Bentinck's action in withdrawing British control from Nagpur, found the difficulty of laying down any definite line of conduct towards all the states. The terms of the treaties appeared to limit such right of extended intervention as he would have otherwise liked to assert for the British government. He admitted the difficulty. "The treaties with the Rajpoot States", he wrote in his diary, "generally secure their internal independence. Those with the States of Malwa give us the right, and impose upon us the duty of supervision. It requires, therefore, a most delicate hand to bring the whole into one system animated by one spirit." At Agra, where the establishment of a separate government was contemplated by the home authorities, he favoured the appointment of Metcalfe as lieutenant-governor with "precise instructions" to follow "a system of non-interference" in place of that of Malcolm. He feared that Malcolm if appointed to that position might

be disposed to interfere.(1) Thus even if Bentinck had desired to adopt a policy of intervention he would not have found the attitude of the home government of positive help to him.

But non-intervention was not merely an attitude favoured by the circumstances of his time. It expressed Bentinck's hope and faith to an uncommon degree. Influenced by the utilitarian ideas of the day he strove sincerely to influence the Indian princes to become good rulers and promote the happiness of their subjects. In this way he wanted to identify the interests of the Indian princes with those of their people. The strength of his belief that Indian princes could be made to play the part of benevolent sovereigns made him capable of initiating bold measures without the consent of the home authorities and even of incurring their displeasure. He contemplated resigning when his policy in Nagpur was disapproved. In order to succeed he carried non-intervention to great lengths. He made full allowance for the shortcomings of the Indian princes and was not alarmed to see disorders in their states. He did not make much of the reports sent by the residents at several courts depicting great abuses in the administration. He would even behave for a time as if the

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(1) Ellenborough, Political Diary, II, 13 April 1829, 12-13; Ellenborough to Bentinck, 2 Jan. 1830, Bentinck Papers.



problem of misgovernment in a particular state did not exist and adhere to non-intervention in the hope that matters would eventually improve if the prince was allowed to learn from his mistakes.

It was not that he considered that the British government as the paramount power could not interfere. He avowed such authority on occasion. But by non-intervention he meant to identify the interests of the prince with those of his subjects in a peaceful way. If successful non-intervention would establish happy relations with the princes. The British connection with them would rest on goodwill not force. By promoting mutual understanding and co-operation non-intervention would strengthen the Indian states and the British empire in common. It would further give British paramountcy in India a truly benevolent character. Paramountcy, emerging from the unquestioned superior strength of the British government in India, was not an aggressive power to deprive the princes of internal freedom, though it could be so employed. It had a positive role in enabling the princes to manage their affairs unencumbered by British intervention. It aimed at reforming the states and not destroying them. For that reason, too, it was also power held in reserve and exercised vigorously in the last resort when advice, persuasion, remonstrance and warning

failed to produce any effect. But even then its exercise was to be temporary and meant for the benefit of the people of the state affected by British intervention. Bentinck's purpose was firm and so his approach tended to become theoretical. He pinned his faith in non-intervention even when he felt the chances of reform at the hands of the princes to be unpromising. He did not interfere even when he admitted conditions in a particular state to be unsatisfactory and even though he was enjoined to do so by the home government.

It may be argued that as Bentinck encountered difficulties in following the principle of non-intervention and even saw its failure in several cases he should have turned actively to a policy of intervention and annexation. But this does not seem to have been so. He interfered in Mysore and annexed Cachar, Jaintia and Coorg, but did not give up non-intervention. In fact he did not seek quick results from his policy. Indian problems, administrative or otherwise, required firmness of purpose and application, and a beginning once made was not lightly to be abandoned. India was "a large House", he observed in a minute in June 1834 taking stock of his whole period of administration, "and will need much time, patience and wisdom to put it in order". Having spent more than five years in India, he stated in this minute, he was in a position

to speak on Indian problems with confidence. After Metcalfe and perhaps Macnaghten he considered himself the most experienced person in India and took his stand against the coercion of the Indian princes.

"...we have to render our numerous tributaries contented. We have to engage them to introduce voluntarily and by the effect of our example, and not by our dictation such improved management into their own internal system, as will introduce peaceful habits, and render the numerous hordes of mounted men with which all these states abound, into useful and organised auxiliaries..."

His tours in the western province, he observed, were useful. They allowed him to have personal intercourse with the princes.

"This opportunity enabled me, as I verily believe, to remove much of the distrust entertained of the intentions of the British Power, and of establishing in their minds more comfortable and satisfactory notions of their forced relation with the Paramount Power.(1)

In this connection Bentinck's dissatisfaction with the administration in British India should also be taken into account.(2) From the outset he saw much that was unsatisfactory, much that required reform and overhaul.(3) He made

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- (1) Bentinck, minute, 20 June 1834, Bentinck Papers.
  - (2) T.G.P. Spear, "Lord William Bentinck", Journal of Indian History, Vol.XIX, 1940, April, 105-107.
  - (3) Bentinck, minute, 30 May 1829, P.P. 1831-32, VIII, General Appendix, 275.

In a letter to Grant from the western provinces he writes: "I cannot with a safe conscience omit to state to you the result of my constant observation and enquiries into the effect of our system of civil government. I am, as an honest man, bound to state my deliberate opinion that it is miserably inefficient. You have seen already officially our proceedings to be satisfied that in every branch of revenue, judicial and police, it has sadly failed."  
Bentinck to Grant, 21 Dec. 1832, Bentinck Papers.

reforms but was never satisfied.

"You claim for the British system", he observes with disappointment in a private letter in 1834, "merits which it does not possess. You have described it, not as it is, but as it ought to be... With all due submission therefore, I think we had better reform our system before we attempt to describe it..."(1)

In his evidence before the Select Committee in 1837 he bitterly attacked British rule in India as having brought to India little more than "general peace and tranquillity." In the hands of European functionaries he considered British administration "in all its civil branches, revenue, judicial and police" to have failed.(2) With such critical views of British administration Bentinck's attitude of non-intervention becomes more easy to understand.

Bentinck's policy depended much for its success upon the character and ability of the Indian princes. Where, as in Nagpur, the ruler showed himself alive to the duties of his office, it produced satisfactory results. Where this sine qua non was wanting, as in Oudh and Hyderabad, it was a sad failure. With few exceptions the princes of that generation were lacking in those qualities which could enable them to show an

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(1) Bentinck to [?] 1 June 1834, Bentinck Papers.

(2) Bentinck, evidence on 14 July 1837 before the Select Committee, P.P. 1837, VI (O.91), 189.

enlightened conception of their duties as rulers. The policy of non-intervention may accordingly be said to have been on the whole unsuccessful. While cherishing an exalted notion of their authority they appeared inattentive to the welfare and happiness of their subjects.

"...it is a sad reflection," says Bentinck in his minute of 30 July 1831 "that few of these native princes, more especially among the Musulmans have that high moral feeling which should teach them to consider the welfare and happiness of the people as their paramount duty; they have no education, they are surrounded from their infancy by flatterers and self-interested counsellors who are always exalting their consequence and dignity and endeavouring to maintain the favour of the prince by administering to all his bad passions."(1)

Bentinck's difficulties arising from the shortcomings of the princes were increased by the attitude of the home government. As early as 1830 his policy towards the states, which he conscientiously believed to be "wise and liberal", had met with the strong disapproval of the home government. In fact, along with some other measures of his administration his policy towards the states had brought upon him the marked displeasure of his superiors. In 1829 and 1830 his recall was being considered in England.(2) In 1832, when Grant was the President of the Board of Control, Bentinck felt that he was not

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- (1) Bentinck, minute, 30 July 1831, Beng. Pol. Cons. 30 Sept. 1831. No.2.  
 (2) The Greville Memoirs, edited by Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford, 31 Aug. 1829, I, 315;  
 Ellenborough, Political Diary, II, 29 Jan. 1830, 179.

wanted in India and had even sent his resignation to be accepted if his office was desired by others.(1) If, therefore, knowing that his labours in India were not being appreciated in England, Bentinck upheld non-intervention it shows high courage, endurance and sincerity of purpose.

The question of intervention or non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states remained unresolved even after Bentinck. The problem of improving conditions in the Indian states vexed his successors as it had him. It was not till after the mutiny that the position could improve. The territorial integrity of the states was at that time guaranteed but the right of intervention to remedy serious abuses or even to assume the government for a temporary period was clearly upheld.(2) It was also after the mutiny, when the development of the means of communication had rendered possible better contact and supervision, that things could improve. As has been said, Bentinck had, in the absence of better means of communication, urged the transfer of the seat of government to some more central place.

Bentinck's contribution to the solution of the problem of the Indian states then lay in the fact that at an early

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(1) Bentinck to Earl of Gosford, 2 Aug. 1832, Bentinck Papers.

(2) H.H. Dodwell, Cambridge History of India, VI, 492-494.

period after the establishment of British supremacy in India he worked in earnest to place British relations with the Indian states on a footing of mutual understanding and benefit, and that he considered a temporary assumption of the administration as the remedy for mis-government. But perhaps he deserves a far greater meed of praise for what he sought than for what he could accomplish in this sphere. His great aim to see reform by the princes themselves could not materialize, his intention of finding them playing the part of benevolent sovereigns was disappointed, but he left ideals behind to point and adorn. Between the wars that preceded his administration and those that followed it, Bentinck's period formed an interlude in which a great experiment was tried. Though on the whole it miscarried this does not mean that the experiment itself was wrong or that it would have produced no better results if the princes had shown an enlightened conception of their duties and Bentinck had had the ungrudging support of the home government.

## Appendix I

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## APPENDIX II

## ABBREVIATIONS.

Beng.,	Bengal.
Cons.,	Consultations.
Enclos.,	Enclosures.
Fin.,	Financial.
Gov-Gen.,	Governor-General.
Misc.,	Miscellaneous.
para.,	paragraph.
Parl. Debs.,	Parliamentary Debates.
Pol.,	Political.
P.P.,	Parliamentary Papers.
Pub.,	Public.
Rec.,	Received.
Sec.,	Secret.

Thus Beng. Sec. Cons. stands for Bengal Secret Consultations  
and Beng. Pol. Cons. for Bengal Political Consultations.